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THE

OREGON TERRITORY,

AND THE

BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN FUR TRADE.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS AND CUSTOMS OF THE
PRINCIPAL NATIVE TRIBES ON THE NORTHERN
CONTINENT.

BY JOHN DUNN,

LATE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY; EIGHT YEARS A
RESIDENT IN THE COUNTRY.

[illegible]

PHILADELPHIA:
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C. SHERMAN, PRIN[illegible]

PREFACE.

I SHALL not encumber the reader with a tedious detail of my motives in publishing this work; or of its scheme and plan. This is a kind of egotism, and currying favour with the reader, already carried to great excess. But I shall state a few facts—due to myself to give, and to the reader to know.

Having been articled to the Hudson's Bay Company, I left my father's home in London, in their ship, the *Ganymede*, for their settlements on the Pacific. It is needless for me to give any account of our outward voyage (though I met with some strange adventures) to the Sandwich Islands—at which we stopped for a short time; and thence to the Columbia river. Having arrived at the western head-quarters of the Company—Fort Vancouver; on the northern shore of the river, ninety miles from its mouth—I was placed in the fort, in the situation of assistant storekeeper. After remaining in the fort nearly a year, I was commissioned to proceed northward, in the Company's ships, on trading and exploring expeditions; threading, in our various courses, the whole of the vast labyrinth of gulfs, sounds, straits, bays, and inlets, that interlace the whole of the Pacific shore, for many hundred miles inland, and along many degrees of latitude. Here I was in the character of trader and interpreter; and assisted at the erection of several forts in various parts of the country, never before occupied. I then returned to the Columbia; and was placed, for some time, in charge of Fort George, near the mouth of the river—now an outpost attached to Vancouver—the famous

Astoria, so much vaunted of by the Americans, as their settlement; from which they once threatened, to use Washington Irving's phrase, to "sweep the Pacific;" and spread their internal trade through the Canadas, and the Polar Circles; and banish the *Britishers* as traders, if not as residents, from the whole northern continent—a boastful threat, which they have signally failed to execute. They made, however, every endeavour to realise this most ardent wish of their hearts, but have been completely foiled. In place of being the expellers, they are themselves, in a great measure, the expelled—the result of their own irregular mode of dealing, and cupidity; which have roused against them the distrust, indignation, and hatred of the natives.

Having spent eight years in the Company's service, I was induced, by my father, who had other projects in store for me, to return home.

On my return, although I was, from my knowledge of those Americans that traded on the coast, or had *squatted* in the southwestern part of Oregon, or have lately been employed by the Company as trappers, prepared to hear any monstrous assumptions of right set forth by the American populace, through their *loco foco* organs of the press, I did not expect that the respectable portion of the press—much less that their functionaries, and ministers of state, even up to the president—would echo the opinions of the rabble that controls the legislature. But to my surprise, I found that the subject was viewed by them through the democratic spectacles.

At the opening of Congress, in 1842, the President, without any previous provocation to the declaration; but from the desire, if not the necessity, too characteristic of American presidents and governments, of pandering to the passions and feelings of the multitude from whom they derive their periodical being—volunteered the announcement to the whole world, that the whole territory is American, and that American it will be preserved and maintained. But this is not merely the averment of the President; but the whole current of a most vehement debate runs in support of this fraudulent assertion of a claim. Says the President:—

"The territory of the United States, commonly called the Oregon territory, lying on the Pacific Ocean, north of the 42d degree of latitude, to a portion of which Great Britain lays claim, begins to attract the attention of our fellow-citizens; and the tide of population which has reclaimed what was lately an unbroken wilderness in more contiguous regions, is preparing to flow over those vast districts which stretch from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean."

I published, in *The Times*, and other leading periodicals, on the appearance of this document, an exposition of the true facts of the case. My statement became the subject of many articles; and the British people awoke to a true knowledge of their interests, which the Americans wished to wrest from them. I showed, that up to 1814, they never claimed more than the right of joint occupancy—that after the Florida treaty, they took a bolder tone, and claimed *exclusive* rights—that in 1827, they never ventured to claim beyond the 49th degree. But now they take a bolder tone still; and, on the gambling principle of "all or nothing," claim up to the Russian frontier.

As there was no work lately published by an Englishman descriptive of the country, and the relative position of parties: and as the books already published by *flying* American travellers, who had picked up their accounts piecemeal, in different parts, are strongly tinged by prejudice; I imagined that a true and dispassionate account of the whole country would tend to place the question on its proper basis. I thought then—and this thought was strengthened by some judicious friends, who had seen the several statements that I published, and had examined my rough log-book—that if I had given a fair and dispanoramic view of the *Oregon* territory; and of the relative position, and social pretensions of the contending parties; the British public, being awakened to the subject, would be enabled to come to a sound judgment on the whole question.

Though I have not given the whole account of my notes, I am persuaded that this book will convey a fairer, and more comprehensive impression, than all the American fictions books that have been *hitherto* published on the subject.

It is true that this book occasionally portrays some dark features in the American character; but let the reader clearly observe, that in depicting the American character, I quote American authority; and that in showing the weakness of their pretensions to the country, I quote historical and diplomatical facts—facts not questionable by the Americans themselves.

In brief, and in simple truth, my object is to give the British public an honest, and, as to leading characteristics, a full, account of the Oregon country. I had another object in view, which was, to give an account of the British North American Fur Trade—of which there has been no connective account hitherto given.

THE

OREGON TERRITORY,

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CHAPTER I.

Discovery of North America by the English—Importance of the fur trade—French Canadian fur traders—Coureurs des Bois, or Rangers of the Woods.

The discovery of America by Columbus, and the great acquisitions resulting from it to Spain, soon awoke a spirit of adventure in England: and an expedition was fitted out from Bristol under the command of Cabot, a merchant there, under the patronage of Henry VII., in 1497. This expedition discovered Newfoundland, and sailed along the continent from the coast of Labrador to that of Virginia. Thus England was the second nation that visited the New World; and the nation, the extent and importance of whose possessions have ever been only second to those of any other state—Spain, formerly, and the Republic of America at present. Her possessions she has always made every effort to maintain; and there never was a time when she was more imperatively called on to maintain her territories and her commerce in that continent than she is now.

The discoveries of Cabot opened the way for other adventurers during the next century. The French, under Cartier, penetrated as far as the island of Montreal, and, in 1608, founded a colony in that district. In two years after (1610), the English explored Hudson's Bay. Both nations soon found that in the cold and repulsive forests and plains of the north there was a source of wealth, if not as immediately attractive as the gold and silver furnished to the Spaniards in the genial regions of the south, yet as enduring and valuable as an article of commerce—the peltries of its wild animals. This incentive caused the wildest and remotest regions to be explored, and the greatest difficulties and dangers to be braved and surmounted; and has carried in its course more civilization and social improvement than ever followed the track of those adventurers after the wealth of Mexico and Peru.

It was the fur trade which, in fact, gave early sustenance and vitality to the great Canadian provinces. The adventurers who had settled on the banks of the St. Lawrence, soon found that in the rich peltries of the interior they had sources of wealth that might almost rival the mines of Mexico and Peru. The Indians, as yet unacquainted with the artificial value given to some descriptions of furs in civilized life, brought quantities of the most precious kinds, and bartered them away for European trinkets and cheap commodities. Immense profits were thus made by the early traders, and the traffic was pursued with avidity. The pursuit of this traffic produced a more extensive knowledge of the country—drew the Indians from their recesses to the haunts of civilized life—and rendered Montreal the centre of an extensive trade. Hordes of Indians would come down at stated periods, in a squadron of light canoes, laden with beaver skins, and other spoils of their year's hunting—unload their canoes—draw them on shore—form an encampment outside the town—dispose their goods in order, and open a kind of fair with all the grave ceremonial so dear to the Indians. An audience would be demanded of the Governor-general: he would respond to the application, and hold the conference with becoming state, seated in an elbow chair; whilst the Indians were ranged in semicircles before him, seated on the ground, and silently smoking their pipes. Speeches would be made,—presents exchanged, and the audience would break up in general good-humour.

Then the work of traffic would commence with great activity; and all Montreal would be alive with naked Indians, running from shop to shop, bartering their commodities for arms, knives, axes, kettles, blankets, and various other articles of use or fancy; on all of which the merchants realized enormous profits, as there was no money used in this early traffic; every transaction being conducted by barter in kind.

Their wants and caprices being supplied, they would take leave of the Governor—strike their tents—launch their canoes, and ply their way back to the interior. The supply procured from these periodical visits of the natives to Montreal was, it must be recollected, independent of the purchases made by Canadian adventurers in their visits through the interior.

A new and anomalous class of men gradually grew out of this primitive state of the trade. These were called *Coureurs des bois*, or *Rangers of the woods*, being originally men who had accompanied the natives in their hunting expeditions, and made themselves acquainted with remote tracts, and tribes, and who now became, as it were, ped*lers of the wilderness*. These men would set out from Montreal, well stocked with goods suited to the Indian tastes and wants, and with arms and ammunition for self-defence, or for slaying wild animals for sustenance; and

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would make their way up the mazy and wandering rivers that interlace the vast forests and wastes of the Canadas, coasting the most remote lakes; and by the attraction of their imported goods, creating new wants and habitudes among the Indians; and thus spurring them to renewed exertions in the chase, to procure more furs and other commodities. Sometimes these men would sojourn for months among the natives, assimilating to their tastes and habits with the facility of Frenchmen—adopting in some degree the Indian dress and mode of life, and not unfrequently taking to themselves Indian wives. After a lapse of many months, sometimes a year or more, they would return loaded with merchandise, and then, after disposing of their stock, commence a career of reckless revelry and extravagance; which not unfrequently ended in their ruin. Those who were able to hold out till the next season, were forced upon a new voyage for subsistence. Many of these *Coureurs des bois* became so accustomed to the Indian mode of living, and the perfect freedom of the wilderness, that they lost all relish for civilization, and identified themselves with the savages among whom they dwelt; or could be distinguished from them only by their superior licentiousness, and by their bolder disregard for all law, order, and morality. Their conduct and example gradually corrupted the natives, and impeded the labours of the Catholic missionaries, who were at this time prosecuting their pious work in the wilds of Canada, with diligence and fervour.

To check these abuses, and to protect the fur trade from various irregularities produced by these loose adventurers, an order was issued by the French government, prohibiting all persons, on pain of death, from trading in the interior of the country without a license; and the use of spirituous liquors, if not abolished, was much restricted.

Though this system checked for a time the licentiousness of these "wood rangers," it did not eventually abolish it; for by degrees, according as the privilege of licensing became extended or relaxed, much of the abuses of the old system was revived and continued in another form. The merchants holding the license frequently employed the "Coureurs des bois" to undertake the long voyages at a small per centage, which was sufficient to whet their cupidity, and urge them to fraud and exaction in their dealings with the Indians. At last it was found necessary to establish fortified posts for the protection of the trade, and the restraint of these "rangers of the woods." The most important of these was at the Strait of Michilemackinac, which connects lakes Huron and Michigan. This was a depôt for the merchandise, and a rendezvous for the traders. It is unnecessary to pursue further a picture of the French-Canadian traders; but I may sum up by saying, that the French-Canadian merchant, in those primitive days of Canada, was at his trading-post a kind of commercial patriarch, surrounded with his Indian wives and children, and a numerous train of dependants living in a rude indulgence.

CHAPTER II.

Hudson's Bay Company—Its incorporation, and its privileges.

THIS company was incorporated *in perpetuity* by Royal Charter, granted A. D. 1670, in the twenty-second year of the reign of Charles II. The Charter was granted after much consideration of the national and commercial advantages of such a society; and it was granted to men who had obtained no little distinction at that time. From the large space which this company now deservedly holds in the commercial relations of Great Britain—the great power it has acquired through its liberal and well regulated government, and through the enterprise, zeal, and skill of its functionaries, it may not be uninteresting to detail the names of the original corporators, and the object and terms of the Charter.

It was granted to "Prince Rupert, the Duke of Albemarle, the Earl of Craven, Lords Arlington and Ashley; Sirs John Robinson, Robert Vyner, Peter Colleton, Edward Hungerford, Paul Nerle, John Griffith, and Philip Carteret; to James Hoyes, John Kirke, Francis Millington, William Prettyman, and John Fenn, Esqrs.; and to John Portman, citizen and goldsmith of the city of London;" giving them and their successors the sole commerce and trade of all those seas, bays, creeks, rivers, lakes, &c., in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of Hudson's Straits; together with all the lands, trade, fisheries, mines, minerals, &c., on the confines of those seas, bays, lakes, and rivers, if not then possessed by any British subjects, or by the subjects of any other Christian prince or state. In a word, all those countries whose waters run into Hudson's Bay were included in the Charter. The reason for creating this chartered corporation is stated to be, that those individuals did at their own cost undertake an expedition to Hudson's Bay, for the discovery and prosecution of a trade in furs, minerals, and other important commodities; and by such undertaking made such discoveries as may be of great advantage to the kingdom.

The management of the corporation (which was invested with the usual corporate privileges, of possessing, and transmitting to their successors, lands, rents, jurisdictions, &c., and were to direct the voyages and exploring excursions, and the sale of merchandise), was centred in a Governor and Committee of seven. Prince Rupert was the first Governor; and the first Committee consisted of Sirs J. Robinson, Robert Vyner, and Peter Colleton; with Messrs. Hoyes, Kirke, Millington, and Portman.

The Governor (or deputy-governor for the time being), with the Committee, were to be appointed annually by election among the members; and were removable in case of misconduct. The whole of this vast and undefined region was to be reckoned as one of his Majesty's Colonies, and was called Prince Rupert's Land. The Governor and the Company were to be lords proprietors of the same for ever; empowered to make laws for the good government of the territory and the advancement of trade; to impose penalties and punishments, provided, however, that they were not unreasonable, and repugnant to the Laws of England.

No subject of the British Crown was to be allowed to trade within the Company's territories without their written and sealed permission, under penalty of a forfeiture of the merchandise embarked: neither was even a royal license to trade to be given to any one without the Company's consent. As a proof of the wealth and importance of the Company, even in its infancy, it may be stated, that stock to the amount of *one hundred pounds* (a large sum in those days, if we consider the relative value of money then and now) formed the qualification for the possession of even a single vote. Individuals were allowed a plurality of votes in proportion to their possession of funded property in the concern.

The Company were empowered to appoint district governors, and other officers, to judge in all cases, civil and criminal, according to the Laws of England.

They were also empowered to grant lands—give commercial privileges—build towns—employ, for the protection of their trade and territory, armed force—appoint commanders, and erect forts, &c. They were empowered, also, to transport to England all British subjects found trading in their territory, without their permission; and furthermore all admirals, and other officers of the crown, were enjoined to lend their aid in assisting the execution of the powers granted to the Company by the Charter.

Such is an outline of the privileges and powers granted is the greatest commercial association that ever appeared in England, next to the East India Company; an association that has kept on the even tenor of its useful and prosperous course, diffusing wealth at home, and spreading civilization abroad — ransacking the wildest, the dreariest, and most ungenial regions of the earth to provide comfort and luxury and wealth for the people of England; and pointing out to the benighted savage the means of improvement, comfort, and happiness.

Though there were associations formed by French Canadians for the beaver trade so early as 1630, yet the French had no actual or permanent establishments, nor did they claim the right of occupation of any portion of the interior. It appears, from the history of Father Charlevoix and Hennepin, that, for some years after the date of the Charter, the French had no established trading posts even as far as Lake Superior; neither had they any established possessions in the vicinity of Hudson's Bay. So that the terms of the grant did not interfere with any previous right of others.

Whatever pretensions may have been made by the French subsequently to the Charter to any portion of that extensive region, they were completely set aside on the conquest of Canada; and then the jurisdiction and possessions of the Company were confirmed, in all their former plenitude. Even after the establishment of American Independence, none of the Hudson's Bay territories, or of the waters running into Hudson's Bay, were included in the lines assigned as the boundaries between the possessions of Great Britain and those of the United States. By the treaty of 1794, which permits the most perfect freedom of intercourse and communication between the subjects of both nations throughout their respective dominions, an exception is made of the country within the limits of the Hudson's Bay Company (to be ascertained in conformity with their Charter), from which the Americans are expressly excluded. In fact, the Charter has been sanctioned by various subsequent Acts of Parliament, and by treaties of peace.

CHAPTER III.

British-Canadian fur trade—Establishment of the North-West Company—Its organization and operations—Rivalry between it and the Hudson's Bay Company.

For a long series of years the French Canadian traders found active competitors in the British; and on the conquest of that country, in 1762, they became nearly extinct, the Hudson's Bay Company, and other British traders, monopolizing almost the whole fur commerce of North America. In a few years the Canadian trade began to revive, but under British merchants and under a different system. The old French system of licenses was abolished, as inconsistent with the principles of free trade; and spirituous liquors were allowed as an article of barter, from a knowledge of the ungovernable propensity of the Indians to that luxury, which they would make any sacrifice of property to obtain.

Various expeditions were fitted out by separate individuals, and sometimes by separate rival partners, who pursued their own interests without fear or scruple, and seemed to have only two objects in view,—their own advantage and the injury of their competitors. The consequences were, licentiousness, feuds, and excesses of every kind in those regions far distant from the reach of all legal restraint. The Indians, too, by intoxication, and the vicious example and incentives of the *Coureurs des bois*, and other agents, became quarrelsome, knavish, and reckless. At last, the natives, who were engaged by different contending parties to attack each other, threatened [illegible] common cause and extirpate the traders. These accumulated evils, the result of excessive competition, brought the trade to the lowest ebb, and to save it from ruin several eminent merchants formed a junction, to carry it on in partnership, in 1783. This plan seemed to work well; and similar associations were subsequently formed with success. At last there was an amalgamation of all in one grand association; and this was formed in [illegible], the famous Northwest Company, which for many years exercised so much power, and threatened the destruction of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been chartered since 1670.

The management of this Company was vested in partners, who had various trading-posts established far and wide through the interior. Several of the partners resided in Montreal and Quebec to manage the affairs of the Company; they were called *agents*, and were persons of great importance: the other partners took their stations at the interior posts, where they remained throughout the winter, to superintend the intercourse with the various tribes of Indians, and were called *wintering-partners.* The goods destined for this wide and wandering traffic with the Indians were stored in the Company's warehouses in Montreal, and thence conveyed by boats up the numerous rivers and lakes that intersect this vast region, and by portages, or land-carriage ways.* Though this Company was at first but a spontaneous association of merchants, yet when it became regularly organized, admission into it became extremely difficult. A candidate had to undergo a long probation, and to rise slowly by his merits. He began at an early age as clerk, and served an apprenticeship of seven years, for which, besides his clothing, equipment, and expenses, he received £100. His probation was generally passed in the interior trading-posts, subject to all the uncertainties and hardships incidental to a life in so wild a region. When he had served his apprenticeship, he received a salary commensurate with his deserts, and was *eligible* to a partnership in the Company, though years, perhaps his life, may have passed away before he attained that object of his toils and ambition. Most of the clerks were young men of good families from Scotland,—thrifty, hardy, bold, and persevering, and generally well calculated for the difficult duties they were required to discharge. The principal partners, or *agents*, who resided in Montreal and Quebec, formed a kind of commercial aristocracy. From early associations, and a community of pursuit and interest, the partners were closely banded together; and their union, energy, and wealth, gave them great influence with the government, which often procured immunity for crimes committed by their officials and servants.

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* It must be observed, that *portage* means a land-carriage way, when, in consequence of the impracticability of the rivers, from cataracts, or other obstructions, canoes, goods, and all must be borne overland, until another navigable part be reached.

They held a general meeting every summer at Fort William, near the grand portage, at the northwestern extremity of Lake Superior. Here they discussed and arranged the affairs of the preceding year, and laid down the plans of operation for the next. Here too the clerks, and principal servants, assembled to receive their instructions; and a succession of festivities was kept up for several days. No system could be better devised to infuse activity into every department, and spread the influence of the Company; and some idea may be formed of the extensive range which their operations embraced, from the circumstance that, in the plenitude of their power, they employed no less than *two thousand voyageurs*, or boatmen, at average wages of forty pounds a year each. They extended the fur trade into regions previously unexplored, and opened new and extensive markets for the commercial industry, enterprise, and manufacturing in-

[illegible] of the empire, and so took formal and permanent possession of districts not occupied by the subjects of any other power, among which the most important was Columbia.

The impetus, and almost new character which they gave to the prosecution of the fur trade—their encroachments on the Hudson's Bay Company, whom they not merely wished to outrival, but determined to crush—their subsequent amalgamation with that Company; and the great and lasting influence which this amalgamation has had for commercial good, render it necessary to enter somewhat into detail on their proceedings.

There were three distinct differences between the two Companies which deserve to be noticed. The Hudson's Bay Company had received a royal grant, confirmed by Acts of Parliament, of the vast extent of territory within, or bordering on, *all* the waters that run into Hudson's Bay. It is true the limits were not strictly defined, but they were intelligible. Having, within their own territories, ample range for the pursuit of their trade, they had no incentive for encroachment on foreign territory. But the Northwest Company, being a voluntary association, had no field of operation to which they could lay any legal claim,—they were barely tolerated by the law; and were therefore obliged to try their fortune wherever they could.

2d. The general practice of the Hudson's Bay Company was to remain at their factories on the coast: to these the natives resorted from the interior to trade, coming down the lakes and rivers in spring to dispose of the produce of the winter hunt, and returning in autumn with their supplies of English manufacture, which they received in exchange. But the Northwest Company, having no such established marts, their servants penetrated the very recesses of the wilderness, where they established stations, and huckstered with the natives at their homes.

24. The officers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company were paid regular salaries; were [illegible] certain localities, and had a prescribed routine of [illegible] perform. But the officials of the North-west [illegible] were very differently circumstanced: they were all, [illegible] the nature of their engagements, each a [illegible] limited, speculatively, and were at [illegible] value to the Company only in proportion to the success of their exertions, and to this [illegible] [illegible] and their [illegible]. Sometimes, indeed, the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company were sent into the interior; but this was an exception, and a rare one: whereas the general rule of the North-west Company was to send their agents into the interior, and any location at head-quarters was the exception.

The North-west Company having been fully organized and prepared for operation, they proceeded at once to business with great promptitude and vigour; and though they were, it must be owned, not very scrupulous as to means, yet they effected discoveries, or were the primary means in effecting great objects. Before their time, the Hudson's Bay Company was ignorant of the localities and capabilities of even its own territories; but, now, since its range of knowledge has been enlarged, and its sphere of trade invigorated, by its union with the North-west Company, the whole of the northern continent has been explored, from the confines of Canada and California to the Pole; and all its resources discovered. The North-west Company also performed great services to the Imperial Government during the late American war, by the employment of their servants and [illegible], and their zeal in rousing the Indians.

The trade of the old Hudson's Bay Company was generally carried on with ease, quietness, honesty, and regularity. They had well-understood engagements with the Indians, which were on both sides punctually fulfilled; and on both sides there was confidence and trust.

The Company often gave goods in advance, and the Indians never imagined that the visits of the white man would be attended with perfidy or pillage.

As a proof of Indian good faith, it may be sufficient to state, that in the year 1775, Mr. Frobisher, a Canadian enterprizer, having penetrated into the regions previously unexplored by his countrymen, met a party of Indians, with their canoes full of valuable furs, bound for Fort Churchill, one of the factories at Hudson's Bay, and that he found great difficulty in inducing them to deal with him, even for a small portion. The difficulty was, that they were going to fulfil their engagements, in paying a contracted debt, for which their cargo was but little more than an equivalent. A few years after, a Mr. Pond, who wintered among them, having collected a greater quantity of furs than he could carry away at a time, left the surplus in his hut; and on his return next season, found them undisturbed. Such was Indian integrity at that time! But one of the first efforts made by the North-west Company was to break up that slow mode of commerce, and introduce a quick, haphazard, and exciting sort of traffic among the Indians at their homes. This plan, from the natural indolence of the natives, unwilling to undergo the toils and perils of long journeys, and from their appetite for spirituous liquors, introduced as an article of barter, succeeded. The Company for a time, obtained an abundance of furs; but this abundance led to want.

The best season for hunting the fur-bearing animals is winter, when the fur is in its prime. In summer, the fur is of inferior quality; and this, too, is the season when they rear their young. For both reasons it was desirable that the hunting should be suspended during the summer months. Accordingly, the summer season was selected for the distant voyages of the hunters to the Hudson's Bay Company's factories, for the purposes of traffic. Under this system, no furs were brought home but those of the best quality; and as the breed was preserved during summer, the supply was plentiful. But when the servants of the Northwest Company went to reside in the interior, the natives were tempted to abandon their commerce with the Hudson's Bay Company, and to deal with them, in the prospect of superior advantages. They accordingly continued the hunt throughout the year, and killed the cub and the full-grown beaver alike. To aggravate this evil, the Company, dissatisfied with even this supply, employed young men from the Indian villages in Canada, to go into the interior as hunters, paying them at a stipulated rate for the furs procured. These, having no families to maintain, and having no other employment to pursue, and having besides no interest in preserving the breed of lucrative animals, destroyed them indiscriminately—young and old—in season and out of season. The consequence was, that districts, which once yielded these valuable animals in abundance were nearly stripped of them; and that the home market was drugged—(and while such a system is suffered to continue, must ever be drugged)—with inferior articles. The miserable natives at last saw the impending ruin;—they murmured, but dared not resist.

It was necessary for the maintenance of this Company's monopoly throughout a vast extent of the most valuable beaver countries, that they should employ a great retinue of servants—greater than the legitimate profits of the trade could afford—and to allow them ostensibly high wages. But in reality the wages were low, for the Company reimbursed themselves by speculating on the extravagance, dissipation, and necessities of their dependants; for at every station they kept a sort of tally-shop for credit, where the men were obliged to purchase all the articles they required at an exorbitantly high price. As these were generally a reckless race, and had credit to the amount of their wages, and even more, they were unable to hoard any provision for their old age, or to their families, who were left in a state of destitution. The consequence was, that they were constantly in debt, and in a state of bondage to their employers, there being no alternative left them but a periodical return to their engagements on the terms prescribed to them, or a jail.

From one article, a judgment may be formed of the rest. They were much addicted to the use of spirituous liquors, which, independently of the luxury and gratification, were in some measure necessary; considering the severity of their labours, and the rigour of the climate. Spirits which cost the Company at Montreal little more than two dollars per gallon, were sold in the interior to their servants at eight dollars per quart! So that when a servant became addicted to drinking spirits, the Company sustained no loss by adding £50 to his wages. Another means of keeping the servants in debt and subjection, was the circulation of a depreciated currency, called *Northwest Currency*, in the interior, in which money was reckoned only at one half the value it bore in Canada. The men who were engaged at Montreal had their wages calculated according to the established legal currency, but every article which they received in the interior was charged according to the *Northwest Currency*. The Company also contrived to bring the Indians within their power, by speculating on their necessities. Those who inhabited the more sterile parts of the country, to the east of Lake Winnipeg, and also to the north, on Churchill river, and in Athabasca, which are rocky and full of swamps, well adapted for the habitation of the beaver, but scanty of buffalo and game, were poor, [illegible], and consequently timid and feeble. From these the most valuable furs were obtained, and these the Company intimidated to deal with themselves exclusively.

After the complete organization of the Northwest Company and the expulsion of all private speculators from the fur-trade of Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company became their only rival to the north and west of Lake Superior.

From that time the hostile spirit which had been fostered for years among the clerks and servants of the old rival Companies that became now *fused* into one great whole in the Northwest Company, was all concentrated against the Hudson's Bay Company; and a systematic plan not only was formed to drive their servants out of all the tenable beaver countries; but hopes were entertained of reducing that Company to so low an ebb, as [illegible] induce them to transfer their chartered rights to their formidable competitors. As the contests between these powerful rivals filled a large space in the commercial transactions of British America, and as they eventually led to a great result—the absorption of the Northwest Company in the Hudson's Bay Company, and the undivided sway of the latter association—it is necessary to mention a few instances out of a long series of aggressions, in order to convey an idea of the mode of conducting commercial competition, when a spirit of self-interest prevailed, in regions remote from the restraints of established law.

In 1806, Mr. W. Corrigal, a trader in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, was stationed with a few men at a place called Bad Lake, within the limit of Albany Factory (in the Hudson's Bay territory), and near a post occupied by a much larger body of men commanded by Mr. Haldane, a partner in the Northwest Company. Five of the Canadians in his service, watching their opportunity, broke into Mr. Corrigal's house at night, when he and his men were in bed. They immediately secured all the fire-arms they could find, and, threatening to shoot Mr. Corrigal if he made any resistance, rifled the storehouse, and took away four hundred and eighty beaver skins. Corrigal soon after went to Haldane, and demanded the restoration of the property. Haldane answered that "he came for furs, and furs he was determined to have." These furs were afterwards carried to the grand portage, and formed a part of the Company's [illegible] that year. A similar attack was made in the same year on another station, at the Red Lake, also under the charge of Mr. Corrigal, and fifty beaver skins, together with a large quantity of cloth, brandy, tobacco, ammunition, &c., carried off.

In the autumn of this year, J. Crear, a trader in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, (also on the establishment of Albany Factory,) occupied a post with five men at Big Fall, near Lake Winnipeg. One evening a party of Canadians, under the command of Mr. Alexander M'Donnell, then a clerk of the Northwest Company, encamped at a short distance. On the following morning M'Donnell and his party came to Crear's house, in the absence of four of his men, and, charging him with having traded furs from an Indian who was indebted to the Northwest Company, insisted on their being given up to him. Crear refused; and on this, M'Donnell broke open the warehouse, and struck Crear in the face with the buttend of his gun, inflicting on him a severe wound, and stabbed his remaining servant in the arm with a dagger. They then carried off the furs, a quantity of provisions, and a canoe. On the following February, one of M'Donnell's assistants, at the head of a party, attacked Crear's house, beat him and his men, and carried off a great number of valuable furs. They then compelled Crear, with threats of instant death, to sign a paper acknowledging that he voluntarily gave up the furs, as not being properly his.

On another occasion, William Linklater, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, was returning to his station at Reindeer Lake, bringing on a sledge a quantity of valuable furs, which he had traded from the Indians. He was met, near his own house, by Mr. Duncan Campbell, one of the partners of the Northwest Company, at the head of a body of men, and was called on to give them up. On his refusal, Campbell cut the traces of the sledge, beat him, and bore off the furs, for which no compensation was ever after made.

The Northwest Company having been established some years at Isle à la Crosse, near the borders of the Athabasca country (but within the territories claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company under their charter), had obtained what they called the attachment of the Indians; *i. e.*, they reduced them to a state of awe and submission. To this place Mr. Peter Fidler was sent, in 1810, with a party of eighteen men, from Churchill Factory, to establish a trading post. The Company's officers had, on many former occasions, attempted to establish a trade in this place, which is the centre of a country abounding in beaver; but they were always obliged to relinquish the attempt. In order the more effectually to overawe the Indians from dealing with Mr. Fidler, and to deter him from any attempt to protect his customers, the Northwest Company reinforced their post with an extra number of Canadians. A watch-house was built at his door; so that no Indian could enter unobserved. Here a party of professed *batailleurs*, or bullies, were stationed, and employed not only to watch and scare away the Indians, but to give every possible annoyance day and night to the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Their firewood was stolen—they were perpetually obstructed in hunting for provisions—the produce of their garden was destroyed—their fishing lines stolen in the night time; and their nets, on which they chiefly relied for subsistence, cut to pieces. At length, growing bolder with success, they issued a formal mandate, that not one of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants should stir out of the house.

The consequence was that Fidler and his party were driven away, and the Canadians burnt the hut to the ground. It was not only the prosecution of trade, on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company, that their rivals thwarted, but even attempts to explore the country. This Mr. Fidler had been despatched in 1807 to explore a part of the country through which a more advantageous com-

[illegible] may be opened into Athabasca. He was employed merely as a surveyor; yet he was tracked on his route, and interrupted in every way; and the Indian who acted as his guide was attacked, for his breach of duty to the Northwest Company, and most cruelly maltreated.

To these, and many similar outrages, the difficulty of obtaining legal redress gave, to a certain extent, impunity. It is true there was an act passed by the Imperial Parliament, in 1803, called the "Canadian Jurisdiction Act," to repress and punish such crimes; and it was passed in consequence of the complaints made of the many outrages of the servants of the Old and New Northwest Companies on each other, when these companies were violent competitors,—before their union. By this Act, the courts of law in Canada were allowed to take cognizance of any offences committed within the "Indian territories."

But though Canadians contending against Canadians may not have been brought under the operation of this Act, yet when the struggle and the contention came to be between the Canadians united on the one side, (after the junction of the Companies,) and the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company on the other, it would have been next to an impossibility for a Hudson's Bay Company complainant—a stranger—to obtain redress at Montreal for an outrage committed by a Canadian, perhaps at a distance of three or four thousand miles. The Canadians were in possession of all the water and land passages to Montreal—their friends and employers were then willing and able to assist them, and they could have no lack of witnesses. But how could a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had no command of the line of route, and who had no intercourse with Canada, and no agent there, convey his witnesses safely such a distance, and by such a route; and how could he hope for equal facility of maintaining his cause in Montreal?

There was only one case brought to trial for twelve years. This case, if truly reported, furnishes an example of gross oppression. In 1809, Mr. W. Corrigal, of the Hudson's Bay Company, occupied a post near Eagle Lake, to the north of Lake Superior. A party of the Northwest Company established, on the 15th of September, an encampment about forty yards from his house, under the command of Mr. Æneas M'Donnell, a clerk of the latter Company. On the evening of their encampment, an Indian arrived in his canoe, bringing a cargo of furs, in part payment of a debt which he owed Corrigal; and remained at his house all night. Next morning, as he was returning home with some goods—such as clothing, ammunition for his winter's hunt, &c., M'Donnell, with five of his servants, went down to the wharf, and seized on the loaded canoe, on the alleged ground that he was indebted to the Northwest Company. Corrigal, witnessing the occurrence, sent down two of his men to secure the canoe. M'Donnell drew his sword and severely wounded one of the men—Tate. This scene soon brought up reinforcements from both sides; and a general fight ensued, during which M'Donnell did great execution with his sword. Corrigal's party were obliged to retreat in a sad plight. In the pursuit, M'Donnell was about to cut down a person named Mowatt, whom he had previously wounded, when Mowatt turned round and shot him on the spot. This put a stop, then, to hostilities. The Northwest Company's servants despatched couriers to their friends in the neighbouring posts, and on the next day assembled in large bodies before Corrigal's house, which he had in the mean time barricaded, demanding, with threats of instant destruction to the whole party in case of refusal, that the person who shot M'Donnell should be given up. Mowatt then stepped forward, and said that he was the man, and would do it again in his own defence. He then surrendered himself, and it was agreed that two of his party, Tate and Leask, should be taken with him, as his witnesses, straight to

Montreal; but if he were detained till spring, then one of these was to be sent back to Eagle Lake, and Mr. Corrigal himself was to go to Montreal as his witness. They accordingly were taken to the Northwest Company's encampment, where Mowatt was placed in irons.

They were thence removed to a station called Lac La Pluie, where they were detained till the 26th of February, Mowatt being kept all the time in irons, and his witnesses subjected to great suffering. On the 26th of February, [illegible] was sent back, and Mr. Corrigal set out. He, Tate, and the prisoner arrived at Fort William on the 9th of June. On the 21st, Mr. A. Shaw, a partner, and a magistrate for the Indian territory, under the Act of 1803, arrived from Montreal, and ordered Mowatt to be summoned before him. Mowatt refused to answer any questions, saying he wished to be taken at once to Montreal, and placed on his trial. He was ordered back to the close and solitary dungeon in which he had been confined, and placed under heavy irons. Here he was detained till the 17th of August, though canoes were constantly plying between that place and Montreal. When he was taken out to be removed to Montreal, he fell down twice from weakness, and cut his face with his handcuffs. During his confinement it was feared by the jailer that the solitude and privation were driving him to delirium, and his razors were removed.

Corrigal and Tate arrived soon after, and to their surprise, were arrested as accessories. Thus was the prisoner deprived of his only means of defence; and two men, innocent of the act, who went down according to previous agreement, as witnesses—free and uncharged, a distance of fifteen hundred miles in his behalf, were entrapped into a prison. The three were penniless, unknown, and unfriended in Montreal. It was not till the end of November that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, who at that time had no agent or correspondent in Montreal, or any place in Canada, heard of the prosecution thus carried on against their servants; and they then took steps for their defence by engaging counsel. The prisoners remained in prison about six months; and during most of that time endured great hardship. They were indicted for murder. The grand jury returned a *true bill* against Mowatt, but ignored the bills against the others. At Mowatt's trial the influence of the Northwest Company was evident. The jury was generally believed to have been packed; and more than one indication of manifest partiality was exhibited from the bench. Though it was clearly proved that M'Donnell began the attack without provocation; and that Mowatt fired in self-defence, he was found guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced to be imprisoned for six months (having been already in close confinement for eighteen months), and branded in the hand with a red-hot iron.

Such are the leading facts of this memorable case, about which much has been written, and which awakened the attention of the British public to one of the modes of carrying on the Canadian fur trade. From the bitter spirit in which these contests were carried on, and the criminations and recriminations so liberally and boldly dealt out on both sides, it is not easy now to arrive at a clear conclusion as to the relative amount of delinquency of either party. The weight of evidence, however, seems to incline in favour of the Hudson's Bay Company. They had no occasion, at least were not under the same necessity of resorting to violent means for securing a profitable trade as their rivals. They had a charter which gave them great advantages; they had not an equal force to present against their rivals; and besides, the scene of operations lay at a great distance from their head-quarters. But, however, good came from evil: it led to a junction, and the undisturbed and salutary prosecution of the whole trade.

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company's settlement, under Lord Selkirk, at Red River—destruction of it by the Northwest Company.

It may not be uninteresting to give an account of a very judicious and laudable attempt made by the Hudson's Bay Company, to establish an agricultural colony, as the nucleus, from which, in progress of time, civilized society would spread in the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company—an attempt which, unhappily, was marred by the influences of avarice and jealousy. The Company had long been of opinion that, as the country over which they held unlimited jurisdiction contained so many natural resources, and was capable of yielding other riches besides furs, it would be desirable, for many reasons, to establish colonies in the interior; for, independently of the advantages accruing to the settlers themselves for acquiring the means of independent subsistence, perhaps denied to them in their native country, the example of well-regulated communities, showing a respect for law, order, integrity, and religion, would operate beneficially in the commercial intercourse between the rude natives and the licentious traders. But to found such colonies in a country so far removed from any civilized establishments was a matter surrounded with difficulties. It required persons of property, influence, and judgment to undertake the management of the plan.

Lord Selkirk, who possessed considerable spirit of enterprise, and acquired some note as a writer on colonial emigration, entered into a negotiation with the Company.

They accordingly, on condition of speedy settlement, made to him a grant of land in a salubrious and fertile district, where the land was abundantly supplied with buffalo and other wild cattle, and the lakes and rivers with excellent fish. He commenced then, in 1812, a settlement at Red River, near its junction with the Assiniboin River, to the south of Lake Winnipeg. Miles M'Donnell, Esq., formerly a captain in the Queen's Rangers, was selected to conduct the undertaking, and was, at the same time, appointed governor of the district, under the authority conferred by the Company's charter. Though the settlement was formed in a district which had been exhausted of valuable furs by the extirpation of the beaver; and though the settlers were prevented, by the very tenure of their lands, from interfering in the fur trade, and were thus exempted from the suspicion of rivalry; yet, extraordinary as it may appear, the Northwest Company, from the very moment that the Hudson's Bay Company engaged in the plan of forming an agricultural settlement upon an extended scale within their territories, avowed their determined hostility to the settlement; or to any execution, however partial, of such a project. As they wished to hold exclusive possession of the country, they were jealous of any establishment that could be formed within the range of their monopoly, where habits of sobriety, and principles of moral integrity would operate as a check on the conduct of their servants; and they resolved to destroy it.

The settlement presented every appearance of growing prosperity. Emigrants were arriving; and the Indians evinced a friendly disposition. But in the autumn of 1814, after a general meeting of the partners of the Northwest Company, held at Fort William, near Lake Superior, an expedition was fitted out against it. The intentions of the Northwest Company can be judged of by a letter from Mr. Alexander M'Donnell, one of the partners, dated August 5, and addressed to a brother-in-law of the

Hon. William M'Gillwray, another of the partners, residing in Montreal.

"You see myself, and our mutual friend Mr. Cameron, so far on our way to commence *open hostilities against* the enemy. Much is expected from us. One thing certain is, that we will do our best to defend what we consider our rights in the interior. Nothing but the *complete downfall* of the colony will satisfy some, by fair or *foul* means—a most *desirable object* if it can be effected. So here is at them with all my heart and energy."

Their first plan of proceeding was to seduce or frighten away as many of the colonists and their servants as they could; and raise the Indians to destroy the settlement. Previously to their setting out, M'Donnell and Cameron provided themselves with the uniforms of British military officers, and administered an oath in Fort William to their followers to obey all the orders of their commander for the defence of the interests of the Company in the Northwest. On their arriving at Fort Gibraltar, a fort belonging to the Northwest Company, within about a mile of the Red River settlement, Cameron assumed the style and title of commander, alleging that government had conferred that appointment upon him, and issued proclamations in that character. Their first step was to excite discontent among the settlers; and several of them were induced, by prospects of reward or by intimidation, to desert, and pillage the settlement; which they did; for among other articles, they took off nine pieces of artillery, with a quantity of muskets and ammunition, sent out by the board of ordnance for its defence; Cameron and his party being posted under arms close by ready to support the plunderers if resisted. The settlement being thus deprived of its principal means of defence, and harassed for months by a series of other aggressions and losses, it was at last determined, in June 1815, that Cameron should attack it with his whole force. This attack, followed up by others, having failed, though attended with much damage to the colony, the assailants brought the artillery to batter down the buildings. Then at last the governor was obliged to surrender, and he was sent a prisoner to Montreal, under a warrant from a partner of the Northwest Company on a charge of having prohibited the exportation of provisions; and having detained some bags of pemican (a preparation of dried buffalo meat) belonging to the Company. The remainder of them were expelled; their cattle slaughtered; and their buildings levelled down.

Messrs. M'Donnell and Cameron were treated with great distinction by the Company, and in approbation of their services were retained in their former posts.

But in autumn, the colonists who had been driven out returned with an accession to their numbers, partly from Scotland, and partly from Canada, under the conduct of Mr. Colin Robertson, a gentleman in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and resumed the occupation of their fields at Red River. Soon after, Robert Semple, *Esq.*, who had been appointed governor over the whole of the Hudson's Bay territories, arrived at Red River. The Northwest Company now felt that a more vigorous effort than the former could alone enable them to destroy the renovated settlement. The previous stratagems, of sowing disaffection, and influencing the colonists, were now impracticable. They were committed in open warfare with the Hudson's Bay Company; their sole hopes then lay in superior physical power. An unusually large force was collected, in the spring of 1816, at *Northwest Fort*, on the river Qui Appelle, within the Hudson's Bay territories, under the command of Alexander M'Donnell. To form this force, requisitions had been made upon various forts of the Northwest Company, to a very great distance; all of whom contributed their quotas. The greatest energy was exhibited by the different partners of the Company. Mr. Duncan Campbell, a partner who commanded at Fort Cumberland, in despatching his reinamusements, told them that it was indispensable that they should have the Governor, Mr. Semple, and Mr. Robertson, or their heads.

The Hudson's Bay Company had a post likewise on the river Qui Appelle, in the vicinity of the post where M'Donnell commanded. This river is one of the tributaries to the Red River. The post established there by the Hudson's Bay Company was one of those denominated provision posts; and from it large quantities of provisions were sent down in boats to the Red River for the use of the colony, and the Company. Governor Semple hearing at Red River that the Northwest Company were collecting a large force at Qui Appelle, and fearing they would prevent the arrival at the settlement of the provisions expected from that quarter, despatched a Mr. Pambrun with an escort, to insure their safe arrival. This party, on their return with the provisions, as well as a quantity of furs and other property, were attacked by a superior force, at an intricate part of the river, where resistance was hopeless—were made prisoners, and carried back, with the cargo, to M'Donnell's position at Qui Appelle.

M'Donnell, when all the expected levies had arrived, set out for the attack of the colony, and on his way sacked the Hudson's Bay Company's boats at Brandon House. Having arrived at a place called Portages des Prairies, about sixty miles from the colony, he halted there with the main body of his forces, and sent forward a detachment of about seventy horsemen, under the command of Cuthbert Grant. The Governor, Mr. Semple, having learned that an armed body of men was at hand, and capturing some of the settlers, proceeded with about thirty attendants to meet them, hoping by his presence and authority to prevent hostilities, especially as he was ignorant of their number and real intentions. He was soon surrounded and summoned to surrender: on his refusal he and his party were instantly slain, with the exception of one who was kept a prisoner, and four who escaped, in the tumult, across the river. Grant employed the prisoner to induce the inhabitants of the settlement, and of the Hudson's Bay Company's fort attached to it, to make an entire and unconditional surrender, as the only means of escaping from destruction. There was no alternative; they were reduced to utter helplessness and despair: and accordingly they surrendered every thing, begging only for their lives. The certificate of protection granted to each individual ran thus:—

"This is to certify that   behaved honorably to the Northwest Company.

CUTHBERT GRANT,

Clerk to the Northwest Company."

This document shows that either real or supposed interference with the interests of the Company constituted, originally, the chief crime of the settlers. These survivors were immediately embarked in canoes, to the number of two hundred, including women and children, with a very insufficient stock of provisions for their journey, to Hudson's Bay. Thus was the *downfall* of the colony, according to M'Donnell's intimation in his letter, effected. The majority of the sufferers were Scotch, and the conductors of the attack were their own countrymen. It shows what the love of gain can do.

CHAPTER V.

Trappers, or beaver hunters—Voyageurs, or boatmen.

In the old times of the Canadian fur trade when the trade in furs was chiefly pursued about the lakes and rivers, the expeditions were, in a great degree, carried on in batteaux and canoes. But a totally different class now sprung up—the "mountaineers"—the traders and trappers that scale the vast mountain chains, and pursue their hazardous vocation amidst their wild recesses—moving from place to place on horseback—exposed not alone to the perils of the wilderness, but to the perils of attack from fierce Indians, to whom it has become as favourite an exploit to harass and way-lay a band of trappers with their pack-horses, as it is to the Arabs of the desert to plunder a caravan. The equestrian exercises in which they are constantly engaged—the nature of the country they traverse—vast plains and mountains pure and exhilarating in their atmospheric qualities—seem to make them, physically and mentally, a more lively, vigorous, daring and enduring race than the fur traders and trappers of former days, who generally had huts or tents to shelter them from the inclemency of the seasons—were seldom exposed to the hostility of the natives, and generally were within reach of supplies from the settlements. There is, perhaps, no class of men on the earth who lead a life of more continued exertion, danger, and excitement, and who are more enamoured of their occupations, than the free trappers of the wild regions of the west. No toil, no danger, no privation, can turn the trapper aside from his pursuit. If his meal is not ready in time, he takes his rifle—hies to the forest—shoots his game—lights his fire; and cooks his repast. With his horse and his rifle he is independent of the world, and spurns its restraints. In vain may the most vigilant and cruel savages beset his path—in vain may rocks, and precipices, and wintry torrents oppose his progress; let but a single track of a beaver meet his eye, and he forgets all danger, and defies all difficulties. At times he may be seen, with his traps on his shoulder, buffeting his way across rapid streams amidst floating blocks of ice: at other times may he be seen, with his traps slung on his back, clambering the most rugged mountains—scaling or descending the most frightful precipices—searching by routes inaccessible to horse, and never before trodden by white man, for springs and lakes unknown to his comrades, where he may meet with his favourite game.

This class of hunters are generally Canadians by birth, and of French descent; who, after being bound to serve the traders for a certain number of years and receive wages, or hunt on shares, then continued to hunt and trap on their own account, trading with the Company like the Indians; hence they are called *free men.* Having passed their youth in the wilderness, in constant intercourse with the Indians, and removed from civilized society, they lapse with natural facility into the habits of savage life. They generally intermarry with the natives, and, like them, have often a plurality of wives. Wardens of the wilderness, according to the vicissitudes of the seasons, the migrations of animals, and the plenty or scarcity of game, they lead a precarious and unsettled existence, exposed to sun and storm, and all kinds of hardships, until they resemble the Indians in complexion, as well as in tastes and habits. From time to time they bring their peltries to the trading-houses of the Company, and barter them for such articles as they may require.

When Montreal was the great emporium of the fur trade, some of them would occasionally return, after an absence of many years, to visit their old associates. There they would squander the long and hard earned fruits of their labours; and after the fit of revelry was over go back to their former toils, and the freedom of the forest. Some few of them, however, retained a little of the thrift and forethought of the civilised man, and became wealthy among their improvident neighbours; their wealth consisting chiefly of large bands of horses, scattered over the prairies in the vicinity of their abodes.

There was another class, the *native Indians* of Canada, who had partially conformed to the habits of civilization, and received the doctrines of Christianity, under the influence of the French colonists and the Roman Catholic priests, who certainly diffused more of the knowledge and principles of the Christian religion among the North American Indians than the Protestant missionaries have. These half-civilised Indians retained some of the good and of the evil qualities of their original stock. Though they generally professed the Roman Catholic religion, it was mixed up with some of their ancient superstitions, especially their belief in omens and charms. These men were often employed for a stated time by the Company as trappers and canoe-men, though on lower terms than were allowed to the white men, but generally in the end they became *free trappers.*

Voyageurs.—As this class of functionaries was, and is indispensable in the prosecution of the fur-trade; and as they form one of those distinct and strong-marked orders of people springing up in that vast continent out of geographical circumstances, or the varied pursuits, habitudes, and origins of the population, the following sketch of a few of their leading characteristics may be interesting and instructive. The voyageurs form a kind of fraternity in the Canadas, like the *arrieros*, or carriers, in Spain, and, like them, are employed in long internal expeditions of travel and traffic; but with this difference, that the arrieros travel by land, with mules and horses, the voyageurs by water, with batteaux, or boats, and canoes. The voyageurs may be said to have sprung up out of the fur-trade, having been originally employed by the early French merchants in their trading expeditions through the labyrinth of rivers and lakes of the boundless interior. They were coeval with the *coureurs des bois*, or rangers of the woods, already noticed, and like them, in the intervals of their long and laborious expeditions were prone to pass their time in idleness and revelry about the trading-posts, or settlements—squandering their hard earnings in heedless conviviality; and rivalling their neighbours the Indians in indolent indulgence and an improvident disregard to to-morrow. Their dress is generally half civilized, half savage. They wear a capot, or outside coat, made of a blanket—a striped cotton shirt—cloth trowsers, or leathern leggins—moccasins, or deerskin shoes, without a sole, and ornamented on the upper; and a belt of variegated worsted, from which are suspended a knife, tobacco-pouch, and other implements. Their language is of the same piebald character, being a French patois, embroidered with Indian and English words and phrases. Their lives are passed in wild and extensive rovings in the service of individuals, but more especially of the fur-traders. They are generally of French descent, and inherit much of the gaiety and light-heartedness of their ancestors; being full of anecdote and song, and ever ready for the dance. They inherit, too, a fund of civility and complaisance; and instead of that hardness and grossness which men in laborious life are apt to indulge towards each other, they are naturally obliging and accommodating—interchanging kind offices,—yielding each other assistance and comfort in every emergency; and using the familiar and affectionate appellations of "cousin," and "brother," when there is, in fact, no relationship. Their natural good-will is probably heightened by a community of adventure and hardship in their precarious and wandering life. No men are more submissive to their leaders and employers—more capable of enduring hardships, or more good-humoured under privations. Never are they so happy as when on long and rough expeditions, toiling up rivers, or coasting lakes, on the borders of which they encamp at night, gossip round their fires, and bivouac in the open air. They are dexterous boatmen, vigorous and adroit with the oar and paddle, and will row from morning till night without a murmur. The steersman often sings an old traditionary French song, with some regular chorus, in which they all join, keeping time with their oars; and if at any time they flag in spirits or relax in exertion, it is but necessary to strike up a song of the kind to put them all in fresh spirits and activity. The Canadian waters are vocal with these songs, that have been echoed from mouth to mouth, and transmitted from father to son, from the earliest days of the colony; and it has a pleasing effect to see, in a still, golden summer evening, a batteau gliding across the bosom of the lake, dipping its oars to the cadence of these quaint old ditties, or swooping along in full chorus, on a bright sunny morning, down the transparent current of one of the Canadian rivers.

When Canada passed under British domination, and the old French trading-houses were broken up, the voyageurs, like the *coureurs des bois*, were for a long time disheartened and disconsolate; and with difficulty could reconcile themselves to the service of the new-comers, so different in manners, habits, and language, from their former employers. By degrees, however, they became accustomed to the change; and at length came to consider the British fur-traders, and especially the Northwest Company, as the legitimate lords of creation.

"An instance," says W. Irving, "of the buoyant temperament and professional pride of these people was furnished in the gay and braggart style in which a party of them arrived at New York to join the enterprise.* They were determined to regale and astonish the people of the 'States' with the sight of a Canadian boat and a Canadian crew. They accordingly fitted up a large, but light, bark canoe—such as is used in the fur-trade—transplanted it in a wagon from the banks of the St. Lawrence to the shores of Lake Champlain—traversed the lake in it from end to end—hoisted it again in a wagon—wheeled it off to Lansingburg, and then launched it upon the waters of the Hudson. Down this river they plied their course merrily on a fine summer's day, making its banks resound, for the first time, with their old French boat-songs—passing by the villages with whoop and halloo, so as to make the honest Dutch farmers mistake them for a crew of savages. In this way they swept in full song, and with regular flourish of the paddle, round New York, in a still summer evening, to the delight and admiration of its inhabitants, who had never witnessed on their waters a nautical apparition of the kind.

"But we are talking of things that are fast fading away. Mechanical invention is driving every thing poetical before it. The steamboats, which are fast dispelling the solitude, wildness, and romance of our lakes and rivers, are proving as fatal to the race of Canadian voyageurs, as they have been to the boatmen on the Mississippi. They are no longer the lords of our internal seas, and the great navigators of the wilderness. Their range is fast contracting to those remote waters, and shallow and obstructed rivers unvisited by the steamboat. In the course of years they will gradually disappear—their songs will die away like the echoes they once awakened; and the Canadian voyageurs will become a forgotten race, or remembered, like their associates the Indians, among the poetical images of past times, and as a theme for local and romantic associations."

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* The trading expedition fitted out by Mr. Foster for the Columbia.

Without speculating as to the duration of their future existence, (and unless steam should make rapid strides, and produce wonderful changes,—"make the rough ways smooth, and the crooked straight,"—deepen shallows—level waterfalls; and smoothen rapids, in the streams, lakes, and rivers of British America, their extirpation in the northwest is not likely soon to occur), I may observe, that however much the romance and poetry of their pursuit and enterprise may decay, their physical comforts are likely to be greatly improved. The system under which they so successfully played the part of joyous adventurers, indefatigable fresh-water rovers, has been changed, and for the better. The whole of the vast continent stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and from Lake Superior and the Columbia to the Pole, save the strip of sea-coast occupied by the Russians on the North Pacific, is under the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company. Throughout this immense region they have stations established at convenient distances; and within the limits of the territories attached to each station, the duties of the several bands of voyageurs are generally confined. They know their range of adventure, where they are to halt, and what is to be their final destination. They are well paid and well fed, and need have no care for to-morrow. It is true they have less ardent spirits, but they have more substantial food. They have less incentive for speculation, but they have more certainty of pay. They have less freedom, but more security of person.

The following sketch of the fare of the voyageurs, and the other hard-working servants of the Company, at present, though applied to a peculiar undertaking, will, however, in the main, hold good about their treatment generally. I must premise that animal food is their only subsistence often in those remote regions; as they have neither bread nor vegetables:—

"On Christmas and New Year's days," says Simpson, "we entertained our assembled people with a dance, followed by a supper consisting of the best fare we could command. By this time we had, through our indefatigable exertions, accumulated two or three weeks' provisions in advance, and no scarcity was experienced during the remainder of the season. The daily rations served out to each man was increased from eight to ten, and to some individuals twelve, pounds of venison, or, when they could be got, four or five white-fish, weighing from fifteen to twenty pounds. This quantity of solid food, immoderate as it may appear, does not exceed the average standard of the country; and ought certainly to satisfy the inordinate appetite of a French Canadian; yet there was one of them who complained he had not enough, and did not scruple to help himself to an additional supply whenever the opportunity offered—it would have taken twenty pounds of animal food daily to satisfy him."

The Company's servants are not less well clothed and paid than they are fed. They are treated by their immediate masters with a familiar kindness, surpassing what I have ever seen elsewhere, even in the United States; and their whole condition affords the strongest possible contrast to the wretched situation of the Russian "promuschlenicks," as described by Langsdaff. The nature of the climate and the long journeys demand, it is true, hard labour *by times*; but it is labour voluntarily endured, and less physically severe than the compulsory trackings on the rivers of Russia and China, while a great part of the year is spent in comparative idleness; and if the voyageur finds the fatigue and hardships too great, it rests with himself to be released from them at the close of his three years' contract.

The canoes generally used by the fur traders of the north for navigating the intricate and often obstructed rivers, are between thirty and forty feet long, and several feet in width, constructed of birch bark, sewed with fibres of the roots of the spruce tree, and daubed with resin of the pine, in place of tar. These, though capable of sustaining a freight of four tons each, can readily be carried on men's shoulders. Canoes of this kind are generally managed by eight or ten men, two of whom are picked veterans, who received double wages, and are stationed one at the bow, the other at the stern, to keep a look-out and to steer: they are termed the foreman and the steersman. The rest, who ply the paddles, are called middle men. When there is a favourable breeze, the canoe is occasionally navigated with a sail. From the lightness of such materials as the canoes were made of—bark—the utmost vigilance, patience, and exertion, were necessary for the intricate and difficult navigation in which they were often employed. Sometimes the boat would be exposed to frequent danger from floating trees, and great masses of drift-wood; or be impaled on sunken trees, presenting a jagged or pointed end above the surface of the water. Sometimes the boat should be drawn by the hand, and by grappling-hooks, from one root or overhanging tree to another, or drawn by towing-lines, when the shores were sufficiently clear to allow the men to pass along the banks. Sometimes a part of the crew would have to leap into the water at the shallows, and wade along with the towing-lines, while their comrades on board assisted them with oar and setting-pole. Sometimes the boat would seem to be retained motionless, as if spell-bound, opposite some point round which the current set with violence, and with the utmost labour scarce effected any visible progress. When it is considered that they penetrated into the interior to the distance of three or four thousand miles—exposed sometimes to a scorching sun, sometimes to the most piercing cold—cutting their way through drifting ice—suffering from physical privations, through unknown and barren regions—beset with dangers, without any certain prospect of reaching any place of security and comfort, some conception may be formed of the life of a northwest voyageur.

A stranger seeing these light and slender vessels piled high with a load of goods of every kind packed in bales, each weighing ninety pounds; with their various necessaries of clothing, food, &c., also stowed away in bales; and with hampers, boxes, &c., containing the articles of the officers; and seeing them weighed down in the water to the gunwale's edge—he would think it an act of utter desperation to attempt to pass in them through boisterous, intricate, and obstructed waters. But so practised, hardy, and zealous are these voyageurs, that danger or accident but very rarely occurs.

There are no birch canoes used in the Oregon country by the Company's servants. They use only the batteaux, which are made of quarter-inch pine boards, and are thirty-two feet long, and six and a half feet wide in midships, with both ends sharp, and without a keel—worked, according to the circumstances of the navigation, with paddles, or with oars. These boats are found to be better adapted to the lakes and rivers there, than the canoes of the north.

When the voyageurs arrive at a *portage*, whether the vessels used be canoes or batteaux, every thing is unshipped; and each voyageur carries two bales, or one hundred and eighty pounds weight, on his back, held by a strap passing round his forehead, on which the force of the draught lies: and with this weight they will run on briskly, sometimes for miles.

CHAPTER VI.

Description of the present settlement at Red River—hunting the buffalo.

When the Northwest Company became merged in the Hudson's Bay Company, and the latter were left at full liberty to prosecute their plans of improvement without rivalry or interruption, they restored the settlement at Red River, and on a more extended scale.

From the circumstances connected with its original formation—from the singularity of its position and character, it being a sort of oasis in the vast waste of a savage region—from its present and growing importance to the objects of the colony, a brief sketch of it may not be uninteresting. It is situated in the fiftieth degree of north latitude, and the ninety-seventh of west longitude, at an elevation of about one thousand feet above the level of the sea, and near the confluence of the Red and Assinaboine rivers, whose united waters run northward about thirty miles, into Lake Winnipeg, which receives many other tributary streams. These two large rivers flow through a fertile country of vast extent, which possesses a salubrious climate. The Red River rises in the United States, near the sources of the Mississippi, and runs northward. The Assinaboine flows from the northwest. The cold season lasts about five months, from November till April. But the ice on Lake Winnipeg does not break up till May. At the opening of the fine season, an immense quantity of sturgeon and other fish is caught. There are occasionally summer frosts, generated by undrained marshes, which impede the exertions of the husbandman; but this evil is gradually melting away before the march of cultivation. The range of the settlement stretches upwards of fifty miles along the romantic and woody banks of those rivers. Their borders are cultivated to the breadth of nearly a mile; all the back country remaining in a great measure in its original state—a vast natural pasture, covered for the greater part of the year with cattle, and furnishing the colonists with a sufficient quantity of hay for the support of their herds during the winter. Horses, horned cattle, hogs, and poultry, are exceedingly numerous. Sheep have been brought at great expense by the Company, from England

and the United States, and are reared with success. Wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, turnips, and most of the culinary vegetables, thrive well. Pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers arrive at maturity in the open air, in the favourable season. The cultivation of maize, peas, and beans promises success. *Hops grow luxuriantly.* Flax and hemp, which have been introduced, show every appearance, in progress of time, of being made profitable crops. In fine, this extraordinary colony, in so high a latitude, is likely to be rendered productive in all the necessaries and comforts even, and many of the luxuries of civilized Europe.

The most common sorts of wood are oak, poplar, elm, and maple; pines are likewise found towards Lake Winnipeg. On this lake two-decked vessels ply, in summer, between the colony and the entrepot at Norway House, which is situated at its northern extremity, where the river navigation to Hudson's Bay commences, as the lake is emptied into that bay by the Nelson River. Firewood is rafted down the rivers, from above the limits of the colony, during the summer, or transported on sledges during the snow and frost. But to obviate all chance of a scarcity in the supply of this article, the colonists are providing themselves with cast-iron stoves, which occasion a much less consumption of fuel. As the population is chiefly Catholic, and as the colony is, at present, the most suitable centre from which to spread the blessings of religion and civilization over that immense tract of country, a Roman Catholic bishop has been stationed there. The two principal churches—the Protestant and the Roman Catholic—the jail, the Company's chief buildings, the bishop's residence, and the houses of some retired officers of the fur trade—who choose this as their lasting home, in place of returning to their native country—are built of stone. The generality of settlers live in frame or log houses, roofed with wooden slabs, bark, or shingles; and are for the most part whitewashed or painted, universally. Every man, however low his condition, possesses a horse; and they vie with each other in gay curricles, harness, saddles, and fine clothes. A great abundance of English goods is imported, both by the Company and by individuals, in the Company's annual ships, to York Factory, at Hudson's Bay, and disposed of in the colony at moderate prices. Labour is dear, and produce of every kind sells at a higher price than could be expected in a place so remote and secluded. Domestic manufactures are beginning to make way, and, by diminishing the annual orders from England, to make the people more independent. They now manufacture coarse cloths, stuffs, shawls, linen, sacking, leather, &c.; and even for their grain and domestic cattle, they are beginning to find a market among the Americans of the level plains leading to the Mississippi and the St. Peter's; and it is probable that before long they will export hides, tallow, wool, hemp, and flax to England.

The currency of the place consists of the Company's notes, with a smaller amount of silver and copper coin. There are fifteen wind and three water mills, to grind the wheat and prepare the malt for the inhabitants, who use neither barley nor oats in bread. Though the Protestants constitute but two-fifths of the population, yet all these mills are in their hands, except two, which have been erected by a Roman Catholic, in the Company's pay, as warden of the plains. It may be remarked that, while many of the children of the Company's retired European servants, who are chiefly Orkneymen, by native women, inherit the plodding and careful disposition of their fathers, the half-breed descendants of the French Canadians are generally characterized by their fathers' levity and extravagance, and their mothers' violent passions. Many of the Scotch, who first planted the colony in 1812, under the auspices of the Earl of Selkirk, have amassed handsome sums of money, besides rearing large families in rustic plenty. Some, fearing the consequences of intermarrying with the *half breeds*, have migrated elsewhere.

The Company, besides extensive purchases of grain and provision for their transport and other service, annually expends large sums at Red River for works of public utility, such as experimental farming—the erection of churches, and other buildings—endowing schools—affording medical aid gratis to the poor—encouraging domestic manufactures—maintaining an armed police—dispensing *justice*, and in contributing to the support of two Protestant clergymen, of a Roman Catholic bishop, and three priests from Canada. Through the exertions of these zealous ministers a great number of the Indians, of the Cree and Saulteaux or Chippeway nations, have been converted and located. From this heavy outlay the Company has hitherto had no return; for the occasional sale of lands has not as yet defrayed the expenses of the survey, (they being, in most instances, bestowed gratis, though purchased from the Indians), and the immediate neighbourhood has been stripped of the fur-bearing animals. Yet, under the Company's fostering care, a population of five thousand persons has been reared up in plenty, comfort, and civilisation; and the colony is every day growing in numbers, wealth, and importance. There are also excellent boarding-schools established by the Rev. Mr. Jones, where nearly one hundred youth of both sexes, the children of the Company's officers, and the more respectable settlers, are trained up in European accomplishments, and in the strictest principles of religion.

The Indian settlements, too, at the lower extremity of the colony, founded by the Rev. Mr. Cockran, are worthy of notice. He has provided school-masters for the native children, and built places of worship, where he regularly officiates. He has also constructed a windmill for the Indians—assists them in erecting their wooden houses; and in every way sets them the example of industry. At the other extremity of the colony, Mr. Balcour, one of the

Roman Catholic priests, conducts a location of Saulteaux Indians on a similar scale. The colony has also a seminary, from which home missionaries—young Indians educated in the Church Missionary Society's school—are to be sent to instruct their countrymen in various parts of the Company's almost unbounded territories. In the countries of the Columbia and New Caledonia, to the westward of the great Rocky Mountain chain, these missionary labours will have a rich field. There the climate is softened by the influence of the Pacific: food is abundant; the numerous natives do not lead the same solitary wandering and precarious lives as the northeastern tribes, but dwell together in villages. They are endowed with a greater capacity and quickness of apprehension; are more placid and tractable in temper; appreciate more the talents, attainments, and social arts of the white man; and are fonder of imitating and adopting their customs and principles. Therefore they seem now more disposed to embrace the doctrines of Christianity, to many principles of which their own belief approximates, from those on whom, a few years ago, they committed the most barbarous murders.

But in the dreary regions of the north, where the Indian hunters are scattered through interminable forests; and where civilization can but slowly, if ever, penetrate, the prospects of their conversion are fainter and more remote. Yet even among these, since the coalition of the rival companies, and the dismissal of the numerous swarms of adventurers, who, encouraged by the licence of fierce opposition, overran and nearly ruined the country, morality, order, and integrity have been, in some degree, introduced through the agency of the Company's officers. Referring to the improved condition of the Indians, produced through the instrumentality of the Company, Mr. Simpson observes, "no stronger proof of the salutary effect of their injunctions can be adduced than that, while peace and decorum mark the general conduct of the northern tribes, bloodshed, rapine, and unbridled lust, are the characteristics of the fierce hordes of Assiniboines, Piegans, Blackfeet, Circees, Fall and Blood Indians, who inhabit the plains between the *Saskatchewan* and the Missouri rivers, and which are without the pale of the Company's influence and authority."

Among the many advantages which the Company is labouring to bestow on the whole race of Indians, one of the most important is the cementing of fraternal and pacific feelings between them, and the reconciliation of their inveterate feuds. Formerly it was the vile and pernicious practice of rival traders to foment the discords of the several tribes, with a view of reaping advantage from them; for they often succeeded, by weakening one after the other, in reducing both to entire submissiveness to their purposes; and they could then dictate the terms of trading with them as they pleased: or if they could not use them in this way, they used them as instruments to annoy their competitors, by crippling their trade, and raising up enemies against them. Thus the natives, in the complex and ramified system of commercial competition for a long time carried on in the northwest, were committed against the traders, and became involved in hostility with one another. This hostility acquiring strength and inveteracy with each succeeding act of aggression and retaliation, outlived the original cause; and often lasted for generations after the first instigators quitted the scene, and ceased to feel the remotest interest in the progress and consequences of their own misdoing. Their maxim seemed to be—

> "Mischief, thou art afoot;
> Take now whatever course thou wilt."

But all the exertions of the Hudson's Bay Company to check and extinguish these evils are, to some extent, thwarted by the conduct of the United States' traders, who labour to keep alive all the vices of the old Canadian system, and to introduce, with all their characteristic grasping and perseverance, new ones. They consider that every artifice is legitimate in trade; and in place of blushing at its infamy, they chuckle at its cleverness. The Company has endeavoured to reconcile the hostile tribes to each other,—to induce them to spare the young of the fur-bearing animals, so as to preserve the breed, and keep the trade alive for the benefit of both parties in perpetuity; and to discountenance the use of ardent spirits, which have been so baneful to the natives. But the Americans, for the sake of effecting an immediate and temporary gain, pursue generally the very opposite course.

At Red River the buffaloes are now seldom taken in pounds. Here it may be observed, that to a stranger the wild buffalo bull, with his large hump, glaring eyes, fierce aspect, and long beard, that almost sweeps the ground, when encountered in the recesses of the forest, or in the open plain, where there is no chance of escape, is the most formidable animal in America—far more so than the panther, or grisly bear. In the summer and autumn large parties of the half-breed hunters, all mounted on their small Indian horses, which are well broken in to this sport, scatter themselves over the plains, camping generally in the open air, or in tents covered with hides; or under their provision carts. As soon as the buffaloes are perceived, the young men gallop after them, and either partially surprise them on the plains, or succeed in driving them into some little valley or neck of land, projecting into a lake, where escape is difficult. A running fire then opens all along the line. At the first volley the buffaloes scamper off. The hunters continue the pursuit, reloading their guns while their horses are in full gallop; for the sake of expedition the bullets are carried in the mouth, and dropped into the barrel without any wadding: their small whips are attached by a band to the right wrist. The horse, with wonderful sagacity, follows of his own accord the animal which his rider has singled out, and brings him alongside; and the rider then discharges his weapon unerringly. The horse then pursues another with similar caution. In this way many buffaloes in succession are shot by the same hunter; and hundreds fall in a single run. No sight can be livelier than a camp of successful hunters. They generally pitch in some clump or point of woods: the provision carts form the outer circle, to which the horses are tied; within this fires blaze on every side. The men smoke their pipes, or arrange their firearms; while the women are employed in cooking a sumptuous repast. The jest and the laugh circulate freely all around. During the time the men are employed in hunting, the families are occupied in drying the spare meat, or converting it into pemican.

Pemican.—This far-famed provender for man in the wilds of northern America is formed by pounding the choice parts of the meat very small, dried over a slow fire, or in the frost, and putting it into bags made of the skin of the slain animal; into which a proportion of melted fat is then poured. The whole then being strongly compressed, and sewed up, constitutes the best and most portable food for the voyageurs, and one which, with proper care, will keep for a long time. Fifty pounds of pounded meat, and forty pounds of grease, make a bag of pemican. There is another kind, called the sweet pemican, of which berries constitute the chief ingredient.

In the winter season, this sport assumes a more various character. When the snow is not deep, the buffalo may be run on horseback as in summer: indeed, if the herd be numerous, they beat such a track with their broad hoofs, that they are easily pursued. At other times they are approached by the hunter creeping on the snow. He walks up within a certain distance, far enough not to alarm the herd—then prostrates himself on the snow—

drags himself along on his belly, with his gun trailing after him; and in this way proceeds a long distance before he can get within reach, where the buffaloes are shy. When fatigued with this laborious and unnatural position, he stops for a time to recruit himself; he then throws up a little heap of snow before him to screen him from his prey. Some of the hunters are said to be so dexterous in this mode of approach, as actually to drive aside the old bulls who form the outer guard of the herd, in order to select the choicest of the cows. In order to effect this object, he wears the disguise of a whitish-coloured cap, furnished with upright ears to give him the appearance of a wolf; for from constant familiarity, that animal is regarded by the buffalo without dread. In the spring of the year, when there is a hard crust on the snow, produced by alternate thaw and frost, the buffaloes are frequently run down by the hunters, and stabbed with their daggers, while floundering in the deep drifts, which yield to their weight, but support their pursuers, who are borne up by their snow-shoes. In this way, which is the easiest and safest of all, the animals fall a prey even to the boys and women.

It is well worth while to insert here the following sketch of the northern Indians, from Mr. Simpson:—

"No people so soon get tired of any particular diet as Indians; and their longings for change, even amidst the best cheer, are often truly ridiculous. The flexibility of their stomachs is no less surprising. At one time they will gorge themselves with food, and are then prepared to go without any for several days, if necessary. Enter their tents; sit there, if you can, for a whole day, and not for an instant will you find the fire unoccupied by persons of all ages cooking. When not hunting or travelling, they are, in fact, always eating. Now, it is a little roast, a partridge or rabbit perhaps; now, a tid-bit broiled under the ashes; anon, a portly kettle, well filled with venison, swings over the fire; then comes a choice dish of curdled blood, followed by the sinews and marrow-bones of deer's legs singed on the embers. And so the grand business of life goes unceasingly round, interrupted only by sleep. Another physical singularity of the northern tribes is, that though capable of resisting with great fortitude the most intense cold, they are wonderfully fond of fire. At an establishment, even when the weather is mild and pleasant out of doors, they are to be seen heaping on fuel in the house, and actually sitting cross-legged on the hearth, where a white man would speedily be roasted. I have, however, remarked that the invariable effect of North American climate is to render even Europeans more chilly than on their first arrival; from which we must infer that there is something debilitating in the climate or mode of life. It is a general rule among the traders, not to believe the first story of an Indian. He will tell you on arriving that there are no deer, and afterwards acknowledge them to be numerous; that he has been starving, when he has been living in abundance; that certain individuals are dead, yet after he has smoked his pipe, and eaten his fill, ask him what is the matter with these same persons, and he will describe some trifling ailments, a surfeit, perhaps; for though at times these people endure with great fortitude, the least sickness makes them say, 'I am going to die!' —a trait that also extends to their half-breed descendants."

Much has been written about the origin of the population of North America. The general opinion seems to incline to the theory, that they came from Asia. It does not come within the scope of my present purpose to enter on this inquiry, even were I competent to the task; but I may state what has been the most probable result of philosophical inquiry, and already mentioned by others.

The tribes who possess the vast region to the northward of a line drawn from Churchill on Hudson's Bay, across the Rocky Mountains to New Caledonia and the

Pacific, comprehending the Chipewyans; the Copper Indians; the Beaver Indians, of Peace River; the Dog-ribs, and Hare Indians, of M'Kenzie River, and Great Bear Lake; the Thœcanies, Nahanies, and Dahadinnehs, of the mountains; and the Carriers, of New Caledonia, all speak different dialects of the same original tongue. Next to these succeed the Crees, speaking another distinct language, and occupying another great section of the continent, extending from lesser Slave Lake through the woody country on the north side of the Saskatchewan River, by Lake Winnipeg to York Factory, and from thence round the shores of Hudson and James Bays. South of the fiftieth parallel, the circles of affinity contract, but can still be easily traced. The Carriers of New Caledonia, like the people of Hindostan, used, till lately, to burn their dead—a ceremony in which the widow of the deceased, though not sacrificed as in the latter country, was obliged to continue beating on the breast of the corpse, while it slowly consumed on the funeral pile; in which cruel duty she was often severely scorched. Instead of being burned, she was obliged to serve, as a slave, the relatives of her deceased husband for a series of years, during which she wore around her neck a small bag, containing part of the bones or ashes of her former husband. At the end of the allotted term, a feast was made, and she was declared at liberty to cast off the symbols of her widowhood, and wed again. These customs have been abolished by the Hudson's Bay Company.

CHAPTER VII.

Remarks on the Company's present principles of dealing; and the mode of traffic among many of the northern tribes.

The principle universally acted on throughout the Company's territories, which have been now reduced, considering their vast extent, and the many difficulties to be encountered, to a state of astonishing quiet, peace, and good government, is, that the true interests of the native Indian and the white resident are indissolubly united; and that no immediate advantage, or prospect of it, is to stand in the way of improving the condition of the natives.

The following extract from the standing orders of the Company, will convey an idea—though a faint one—of the wise, humane, and liberal spirit by which it is actuated.

"That the Indians be treated with kindness and indulgence; and mild and conciliatory means resorted to, in order to encourage industry, repress vice, and inculcate morality—that the use of spirituous liquors be gradually discontinued in the few districts in which it is yet indispensable; and that the Indians be liberally supplied with requisite necessaries—particularly with articles of ammunition, whether they have the means of paying for them, or not."

Since these general orders were issued, the Company, finding the success of this humane and judicious policy gradually answering the proposed aim, has at last adopted the bold and decisive course of abolishing *altogether* the use of *spirituous liquors* as articles of trade with the natives. They have not only done this in the territories within their own jurisdiction; but have, by a new article introduced into the treaty of commerce, entered into with the Russians by Sir George Simpson, stipulated that the Russians should act, in their trading with the natives, on the same principle. So that henceforward one source of demoralization will be dried up.

It is not only the inclination of the Company to render the natives comfortable, and pacific, and civilised, but it is their manifest interest. The natives are best able to exert themselves in collecting furs and provisions, when they are best clothed, and supplied with ammunition; and they are best qualified to exert their individual and united powers for the prosecution of their trade, on which their own immediate and ultimate good depends, when they are brought to a state of peace with each other, and their savage passions and appetites checked. So far has it been the wish or policy of the Company not to acquire an undue influence over them by loading them with debts, that repeated attempts have been made to reduce the trade to simple barter; and they have often cancelled the debts of whole tribes—for instance, since the junction of the two companies in 1821, the debts of the Chipewyans have been twice cancelled. But from the peculiar disposition and customs of the Indians—especially the *northern* Indians—these good intentions have not yet produced all the hoped-for good, although they are gradually working out their object.

The Chipewyans have a custom which, until eradicated, must operate as a check on their progressive prosperity. On the death of a relative, they destroy guns, ammunition, blankets, kettles; in short every thing they possess; and conclude the havoc by tearing their huts to pieces. When these transports of grief have subsided, they find themselves reduced to utter want, and are obliged to resort to the nearest establishments for a fresh supply of necessaries; and thus their debts are renewed, and their wants periodically kept alive.

In some parts of the Indian territory, the hunting grounds descend by inheritance among the natives; and this right of property is rigidly enforced. But where no such salutary law prevails, their main source of wealth—the beaver—would soon be exhausted by the eager search of the hunters, if the Company had not adopted judicious regulations to prevent the havoc; for they have, for several years past, used every effort, through their officers, to exhort the natives to spare the *young* of that animal. This praiseworthy design has been successful in proportion as the natives have become enlightened, and enabled to see their *own* true interests; and the breed is now preserved in districts where, not long since, they were threatened with extinction. But the attempt will be easily understood to be one of extreme difficulty, in consequence of the passion for depriving the animal creation of life so strongly implanted in the breast of the North American Indian, that it costs him a pang to pass bird, beast, or fish, without an effort to destroy it, whether he stands in need of it or not. The tendency to destructiveness is a vehement instinct of their nature.

Near York Factory, in 1831, this propensity, contrary to all the remonstrances of the Company's servants at that place, led to the indiscriminate destruction of a countless herd of reindeer, while crossing the broad stream of Haye's River, in the height of summer. The natives took some of the meat for present use, but thousands of carcasses were abandoned to the current, and infected the river's banks, or drifted down into Hudson's Bay, there to feed the sea-fowls and polar bears. As if it were a judgment for this wanton slaughter, in which women and children participated, the deer have never since visited that part of the country in similar numbers. In short, the Indians, accustomed either to a feast or a fast, have little idea beyond the present gratification;

and it is to this imprudence that deaths by starvation, and the occasional desertion of infants, and the helpless aged, must be ascribed.

The quantity of provisions furnished by the Indians to the establishments throughout the northern districts, is inconsiderable. In the winter season, it is limited to the rib pieces of the moose, red, and reindeer, half dried in the smoke of their huts or tents, (the bones being removed for lightness of carriage,) with an occasional addition of some tongues. In the course of the summer, when the animals are easily hunted, and there is great facility of water-transport, the more industrious families usually bring to the fort a bale of dried meat, consisting of the fleshy parts of the deer, cut into large slices and dried in the sun, with a bladder or two containing fat, or a bag of pemican.

When the residents of a fort find these supplies, and the produce of their fisheries, and of their cultivated plots of ground (where the ground, from the nature of the soil and climate, is capable of cultivation), insufficient to supply their wants, they engage two or more young Indians, without families, as "fort hunters." These are considered as regular servants; and their duty is confined to the killing of large animals for the use of the establishments. They are allowed to keep a portion of the meat, sufficient for their own consumption: the remainder is transported to the forts, with sledges and dogs, by the servants of the Company.

To become a fort hunter is an object of ambition to the northern Indian, as it is an acknowledgment of his skill and fidelity, and insures to him the gayest clothing. Every prudent manager of a post endeavours to procure more provisions than the actual wants of his charge require. He is thus enabled, from his supplies, to afford the natives timely relief, and to conciliate their good-will, and point out to them the expediency of forethought and economy. These remarks do not apply to the comparatively mild climate of the Saskatchewan, where the plains teem with buffaloes; nor to the still more southerly districts, bordering on Canada, where the natives and the people are in a great measure fed on provisions imported by the Company.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Knisteneaux Indians.

THESE people, from whom are sprung many tribes, under different names, are spread over a vast extent of country. Their language is the same as that of the people who inhabit the coast of British America on the Atlantic, and continues along the coast of Labrador, and the gulf and banks of the St. Lawrence to Montreal. The line then follows the Utawas River to its source, and continues thence nearly west along the high lands that divide the waters that flow into Lake Superior on the one hand, and Hudson's Bay on the other. It then proceeds till it strikes the middle part of Lake Winnipeg, and right through it, to the discharge of the Saskatchewan into it. From thence it accompanies the latter to Fort George, when the line, striking by the head of the Beaver River to the Elk River, runs along its banks to its discharge into the Lake of the Hills, from which it may be carried back, east, to Isle a la Crosse, and so on to Churchill by the Missinippi.

The whole of the tract between this line and Hudson's Bay and Straits (except that of the Esquimaux in the latter) may be said to be exclusively the country of the Knisteneaux. Some of them, indeed, have penetrated further, west and south, to the Red River, and the south branch of the Saskatchewan. The similarity between their language and that of the Algonquins is clear proof that they are of the same stock.

They are of moderate stature, well proportioned, and very active. Examples of deformity are seldom to be seen among them. Their complexion is copper colour, and their hair black, which is common to all the natives of America: it is generally cut in various forms, according to the fancy of the several tribes; but by some it is left in the long, lank flow of nature. They mostly extract their beard; and both sexes manifest a disposition to pluck the hair from every part of the body and limbs. Their eyes are black and piercing: their countenances open and agreeable; and it is a principal object of their ambition to give every possible decoration to their persons. For this purpose vermilion is a material article, which they contrast with their native white, blue, and brown earths, with a frequent addition of charcoal.

"Of all the natives," says M'Kenzie, "which I have seen on this continent, the Knisteneaux women are the most comely; their figure is well proportioned, and the regularity of their features would be acknowledged by the most civilized Europeans. Their complexion, too, is less dark than that of the less cleanly natives."

The dress of the males is simple and commodious. It consists of gloves, shoes, and tight leggins, reaching nearly to the hip—a strip of cloth or leather, called assian, about a foot wide, and five feet long, whose ends are drawn inwards, and hang behind and before, over a belt, which fastens it round the waist,—a close vest or shirt, reaching down to the former garment, and cinctured with a broad strip of parchment, fastened with thongs behind; and a cap for the head, consisting of a piece of fur, or small skin, with the hairy tail suspended as an ornament: over the whole a kind of robe is occasionally thrown. The materials vary according to the season; and consist of dressed moose skin,—beaver, prepared with the fur on, or European woollens. The leather is neatly painted, and fancifully worked, in some parts, with porcupines' quills and moose-deer hair; the shirt and leggins are also adorned with fringe and tassels; the shoes and gloves are also decorated with taste and skill. Their dress is, however, put on according to fancy or convenience; and they will sometimes proceed to the chase covered only with the slightest of them. Their head-dresses are composed of the feathers of the swan, the eagle, and other birds. They also use the teeth, claws, and horns of different animals, wherewith to ornament the head and neck. Their hair, however worn, is always besmeared with grease. All the articles of dress are made by the females, who bestow peculiar pains on the decoration of the men, whose faces are also painted with more care than those of the women.

The female dress is composed of the same materials as that of the men; but of a different arrangement and make. Their shoes are commonly plain, and their leggins gartered below the knee. The vest falls down to the middle of the leg, and is fastened round the shoulders with cords, a flap or cape turning down about eight inches before and behind, and neatly ornamented with quill-work and fringe; the bottom is also fringed, and fancifully painted as high as the knee. As it is very loose, it is fastened round the waist with a stiff belt, decorated with tassels, and tied behind. The arms are covered to the wrist with detached sleeves, which are sowed as far as the bend of the arm; from thence they are drawn up to the back, and the corners of them fall down behind as far as the waist. The cap, when they wear one, consists of leather or cloth, sowed at one end, by which means it is kept on the head, and, hanging down the back, is fastened to the waist belt, and is also tied under the chin. They also have an upper robe like that of the men. Their hair is divided on the crown, and tied behind, or fastened in large knots under the ears. They are fond of European articles; and, like other savages, wear bracelets, rings, and other baubles. Sometimes they tattoo three perpendicular lines—one from the centre of the chin to the centre of the under lip, and one parallel on each side to the corner of the mouth.

Chastity is not considered a virtue among them. Plurality of wives is allowed, and so is an interchange of wives; but if a wife commit an indiscretion without the consent of the husband, she is liable to severe punishment, such as the loss of her hair, nose, or ornaments. When a young man marries he resides with his wife's parents, who, however, treat him as a stranger, till the birth of his first child; he then attaches himself to them more than to his own parents, and the wife always calls him by the title of father of her child. When a man loses his wife, it is considered his duty to marry her sister: or he may have several sisters together. They are, generally, hospitable, generous, and mild, except when inflamed by spirituous liquors; and are indulgent and attentive to their children.

The occupation of the men is war and hunting only. The women make the nets; dress the skins; collect the wood; erect the tents; and perform all the domestic work; and attend to the children. Hence their life is one of great toil; and, from a consciousness of this, they sometimes destroy their female children, and procure *abortions*, which they effect by means of certain simples, and without risk of life to themselves.

Their funeral rites begin, like all their other ceremonials, with smoking, and end with a feast. The body is dressed in the best habiliments of the deceased, or of his relations; and is deposited in a grave, lined with branches; some domestic utensils are placed in it, and a canopy erected over it. During this ceremony great lamentations are made; and, if the deceased be much respected, his relations cut off their hair, and pierce the fleshy parts of their thighs and arms with arrows, knives, &c.; and blacken their faces with charcoal. In some instances the women used to sacrifice themselves to the manes of their husbands. The whole of the property of the deceased is destroyed; and when the relations give up their garments they are willing to take any rags to cover their nakedness. This imprudent custom tends to keep them in poverty, and compels them often to resort to the bounty of the Hudson's Bay Company. At the funeral feast eulogies are pronounced on the deceased; and on his tomb are carved the symbols of his tribe, which are taken from the different animals of the country; and also, if he had in any way distinguished himself, memorials of his own deeds.

Before they engage in war the chief summons the warriors to a council, for which they prepare themselves by long meditations and fasting. When they have assembled, the chief formally explains the subject; and, if they agree to take up arms, they smoke with him the sacred pipe; and this is considered a sufficient enrolment. Every one who attends the meeting brings with him something as an offering to the Spirit; and when the assembly dissolves, these offerings are suspended from poles near the place of council.

They have, at stated seasons, such as the spring and autumn, long and solemn ceremonies. On these occasions, dogs, as the most useful of their domestic animals, are sacrificed; those that are very fat and milk-white are preferred. The scene of these religious rites is an open and elevated space on the banks of some lake or river, so that all persons passing by may be attracted to the spot and make their offerings. But if any one, a member of the tribe or a stranger, should be in want of any article displayed as an offering, he may take it, provided he replaced it with some other article, though of ever such inferior value. But to take any thing wantonly is gross sacrilege.

There are also *private* feasts, attended with religious ceremonies, given by individuals on many occasions, of which due announcement is given. On this occasion the host's lodge is completely cleared out, and decked round with fresh boughs in every part. Even a new hearth is made. The owner remaining in it alone, spreads out a well-dressed moose-skin, neatly painted, (of late they sometimes use cloth,) on which he lays out the contents of his medicine or holy bag—consisting of various articles; the principal of which is a sort of household god—a curiously carved image, about eight inches long. This is first covered with down, over which a piece of beech-bark is closely tied, and the whole enveloped in folds of skins, or cloth, red and blue. This figure is an object of the most pious regard. The next article is the war-cap, which is decorated with the plumes of scarce birds, and with beavers' and eagles' claws, &c., and to which is suspended a quill or feather for every enemy which the owner has slain. Then follow other articles—the pipe and tobacco; and roots and simples esteemed for their medicinal properties. These articles being exposed, and the stem of the pipe resting on two prongs, as it must not touch the ground, he calls in the person whom he means most to honour—and who sits down opposite him. Then the bowl of the pipe is filled, and is fixed to the stem. A pair of wooden pincers is provided, to place the fire in the pipe; and a double-pointed pin to empty it of the remnant of the tobacco not used. The remainder of the guests are then summoned in; and the most solemn awe pervades the whole. The women are generally allowed to be spectators at a distance. The assistant lights the pipe, and presents it to the host, or officiating person, who holds it between both his hands, and standing. He then turns to the east, and draws a few whiffs, which he blows to that point: he observes the same ceremony towards the other quarters; his eyes being directed upwards all the time. He then holds the stem about the middle, between the three first fingers of both hands, and raising it on a level with his forehead, he swings it three times round, beginning from the east, with the course of the sun; when, after poising and pointing it in various directions, he replaces it on the prongs. He next makes a speech to explain his object in inviting them, and concludes with an acknowledgment of past favours, and a prayer for a continuance of them from the Master of Life. He then sits down; and the whole company declare their approbation and thanks by loud and prolonged sighs. After this the assistant takes up the pipe, and holds it to the mouth of the host, who, after smoking three whiffs, utters a short prayer, then hands it round (taking his course from east to west) to each guest, who smokes, and mutters something to him on the occasion. Thus the pipe is generally smoked out; when the host, after turning it three or four times round his head, drops it downwards, and replaces it on the original props. After this he returns the company thanks for their attendance, and wishes them all happiness.

These smoking rites precede every matter of great importance; and sometimes they are politic. If a chief wishes to sound the disposition of his people towards him, or wishes to reconcile any differences between them, he invites them to see his medicine (or holy) bag opened, and smoke the sacred stem with him. As the ceremony of smoking with the sacred stem dissipates all differences and cannot be violated, no one who entertains a grudge towards any of the party can smoke the pipe with him. No one can avoid attending on these occasions; but a person may be excused from assisting at the ceremonies by declaring that he has not undergone the necessary purification: for instance, cohabitation with his wife within twenty-four hours before the ceremony, renders a man unclean, and unfit to join in any part of the rite. All contracts solemnized by this smoking ceremony are held inviolable.

When the chief proposes a feast, he sends quills, or small pieces of wood, as tokens of invitation. Every guest brings a dish and knife, and takes his place beside the chief, according to age or rank. The pipe is then lighted, and the chief makes an equal division of the viands. While the guests are eating, the chief sings, and plays with the tambourin, or the rattle. He who has first eaten his portion is held in estimation. If any one cannot finish his share, he offers a reward—such as ammunition or tobacco, to some friend to eat the remainder. But before they commence these feasts they offer a small quantity of the meat and drink, as a sacrifice, by throwing it into the fire, or pouring it on the earth. Generally the quantity supplied to the guests, must be eaten, however immense; but on some occasions they are allowed to take the surplus to be eaten at home. Care is always taken that the bones be burned, as it would be profanation if the dogs touched them.

At their public feasts they discuss various topics—repeat the heroic deeds of their fathers, and encourage the rising generation to follow their example; while the women sing and dance around the tents, beating time to the music within.

They commence their divisions of time by the night; and compute the length of their journeys by the number of nights passed in performing them. They also divide the year by the succession of moons.

They know the medical virtues of many herbs, roots of plants, and barks of trees. When a blister rises on the foot, from frost, or the chafing of the shoe, &c., they open it with their flint lancet, and apply the heated blade of a knife to that part; and as the best remedy for sprains, they apply the dung of an animal just killed. However, much of their remedies and surgical operations is supposed to derive effect from magic and incantations.

CHAPTER IX.

The Chipewyan Indians.

These are a numerous people, who consider the country between the parallels of latitude 60 and 65 north, and longitude 100 and 110 west, as their home. Their language furnishes dialects to the various migratory tribes who inhabit the following immense tract of country. It begins at Churchill, and runs along the line of separation between them and the Knisteneaux, up the Missinippi to Isle à la Crosse, passing on through Buffalo Lake, River Lake, and Portage à la Loche: from thence it proceeds by the Elk River to the Lake of the Hills, and goes directly west to the Peace River, and up that river to its source; from whence it proceeds to the waters of the Columbia, and follows that river to latitude 52 north, and longitude 122 west, where the Chipewyans have the Chin nation for their neighbours. How far they follow the Rocky Mountains to the east, is not easy to determine; but they extend a long way through the prairies.

They are generally a timorous, reserved, and sober race, not addicted to spirituous liquors. They will patiently submit to severe treatment, if conscious that they deserve it; but will not submit to unnecessary rigour. In their mutual quarrels they are not sanguinary or savage; generally contenting themselves with thumping, pulling the hair, and calling abusive names.

Their notions about the Creation are very remarkable. They believe that, at first, the globe was one vast ocean, not inhabited by any living creature; but that the Great Spirit came down in the shape of a mighty bird, whose eyes were fire, whose glances were lightning, and the clapping of whose wings was thunder. He rested on the ocean, and immediately the land rose, and remained on the surface of the water. This omnipotent bird then produced all the variety of animals from the earth, except the Chipewyans, who were produced from a dog: and this circumstance occasions their aversion to the flesh of that animal, as well as to the people who eat it. The Great Spirit having finished his work, he made an arrow, which was to be preserved with great care, and remain untouched; but the Chipewyans were so devoid of understanding, as to carry it away. This sacrilege so enraged the great bird, that he has never since appeared. They believe that there was a great deluge, which spread over the whole earth, except the highest mountains; on the top of which their ancestors preserved themselves. They have also a tradition among them, that they originally came from a remote country, inhabited by wicked people; and had traversed a great lake, which was narrow and full of islands; also, that in ancient times their ancestors lived till their feet were worn out with walking, and their throats with eating.

The reader cannot fail to notice the curious coincidence between this notion of the creation and the Mosaic account: "the earth was without form, and void, and the Spirit of God moved on the surface of the waters." Here I may remark, that the word which in our translation is rendered *moved*, the commentators say means, in the original Hebrew, *brooded*, or *hatched*; and Milton, who in his scriptural allusions and quotations follows the original, takes the word in this sense.—Paradise Lost, b. vii. v. 235. Speaking of Creation, he says:—

> ———— On the watery calm
> His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
> And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
> Throughout the fluid mass.

Their ideas about the arrow would seem to indicate that they have a confused and corrupted notion of the tree of knowledge and the forbidden fruit—the arrow being more adapted to their condition than an apple. Their tradition about coming originally from a remote country, inhabited by wicked people, would remind one of the dispersion of mankind after the erection of the tower of Babel: and their ancestors having lived so long, until their feet were worn out with walking, and their throats with eating, is a graphic mode of describing the longevity and sensuality of the antediluvians.

They believe in the immortality of the soul, and in a state of future rewards and punishments. They believe that immediately after death they pass into another world, where they arrive at a large river, on which they embark in a stone canoe; and that a gentle current bears them on to an extensive lake, in the centre of which is a most beautiful island; and that within sight of this delightful abode they receive that judgment for their conduct during life, which terminates their final state and unalterable allotment. If their good actions are declared to predominate, they are landed on the island, where there is to be no end to their happiness; which, however, according to their notions consists chiefly in sensual pleasures. But if their bad actions predominate, the stone canoe sinks at once, and leaves them up to their chins in the water, to behold and regret the reward enjoyed by the good; and eternally struggling, but with unavailing endeavours, to reach the blissful island.

Their stature is of a moderate standard. Their complexion is swarthy: their features are coarse, and their hair lank; and their eyes are not so generally piercing, nor their countenances so animated as those of other Indians.

The women have a more agreeable aspect than the men; but their gait is awkward, which proceeds from their being accustomed, nine months in the year, to travel with their large snow-shoes, and drag sledges, of a weight from two to four hundred pounds. They are very submissive to their husbands, who sometimes, however, in fits of jealousy cut off their hair, of which they are very proud, wearing it in fantastic tresses, or in plaits, to a great length; and treat them with fatal severity besides. Sometimes their natural inclinations are coerced by their fathers, as is the case in more civilized life; and they are transferred for a consideration, to live as companions with more wealthy husbands or protectors. The men in general extract their beard; and cut the hair in various forms, according to fancy, or leave it in the long natural flow. Both sexes have blue or black bars, or from one to four straight lines, on their cheeks or forehead, to distinguish the tribe to which they belong. These marks are either tattooed, or made by drawing a thread, dipped in the necessary colours, across the skin.

Plurality of wives is allowed; and the women are betrothed by their parents at an early age, according as interest or partiality leads them: and if a separation takes place, it must be with the consent of the husband. There are particular skins of animals, as the bear and wolf, which the women never touch, as they are unclean animals; and these animals the men are seldom known to kill.

There are no people more attentive to the comforts of dress. The dress of the men, in winter, is composed of deerskin, dressed as fine as chamois leather, in the hair. Their shoes and leggins are sewed together; the latter reaching upwards to the waist, and kept firmly on by a belt; under which a piece of leather is drawn, the ends of which fall down before and behind, as a covering. In the shoes, they put the hair of the moose or rein-deer, with additional pieces of leather, as socks. The shirt or coat, which is girded round the waist, reaches to the middle of the thigh; and the mittens or gloves are sewed to the sleeves, or suspended from the shoulders by strings.

A ruff or tippet surrounds the neck; and the skin of the head of the deer forms a curious kind of cap. Then there is a top garment made of several deer or fawn skins sewed together. This dress is worn single or double, according to circumstances; but always in winter with hair both inside and outside. Thus arrayed, a Chipewyan will lay himself down on the ice in the middle of a lake, and repose in comfort; though in the morning he will sometimes find it difficult to disencumber himself from the snow drifted on him during the night. If, in his passage over the lake, he should be in want of provision, he cuts a hole in the ice, when he seldom fails in taking out a trout or a pike. The eyes he instantly takes out, and eats as a great delicacy: and if he have not an opportunity of kindling a fire, he will eat the fish raw.

The dress of the women is different. Their leggins are tied below the knee; and their body dress or shift is wide, and hanging down to the ankle; and is tucked up at pleasure, by means of a belt which is fastened round the waist. Those who have children, have these garments made very full about the breast and shoulders; as, when they are travelling, they carry their infants on their backs, next the skin; in which situation they are very comfortable. They are also very curious about their baby-clothes, decorating them with porcupines' quills, and beads. Though they are in such a state of submission, yet they possess considerable influence with the men; and are generally consulted about the traffic with Europeans, and other important matters.

From the ease with which they can supply their wants, in taking deer and fish, they are not remarkable for their activity as hunters: hence they participate in those laborious and domestic occupations that, among the Knisteneaux, and other neighbouring nations, are confined to the women. Though they make war on the Esquimaux, (who cannot resist their superior numbers,) and put them

to death—as it is a principle of theirs not t
soners—yet they submit to the Knisteneaux,
so numerous as themselves. They are not so
their communications among themselves, or
gers; nor are they suddenly roused from tor
energy and passion as the Knisteneaux. The
uniform, calculating, and persevering than th

They catch the beaver in nets, as he en
escape from his lodge, when it is broken op
nets are curiously set for the purpose; and a
ployed to watch the moment when the animal
snare, else he would soon cut his way throug
then thrown on the ice, where he remains, as

Their snow-shoes are of superior workman
inner part of their frame is straight; the o
curved, and is pointed at both ends, the front
turned up. They are also very neatly laced
skin thongs. Their sledges are also formed o
of boards turned up in front; and are high
with crooked knives, in order to make them
with greater facility. Close-grained wood is, c
count, the best: but theirs are made of the red,
spruce fir tree.

Though they have no regular government
man is lord of his own family, yet they hav
principles of co-operation for the public bene
country, especially along the north, is very barr
ing but little wood or herbage. Its chief vege
stance is the moss, on which the deer feed; a
of rock moss, which, in times of scarcity, when
water, forms a glutinous substance, and affor
tence to the natives. But though the lakes abo
fish, and the hills with deer; and though they
sidered among the most provident of all the Ind
of the northern continent, they suffer severely
seasons, especially in winter, when they are
necessity of retiring to their scanty, stunted, wo

To the westward of them, the musk ox may be found; but they do not depend on it as an article of sustenance. There are also large hares, white wolves peculiar to their country, and several kinds of foxes. On the surface of the earth there are found beautiful pieces of variegated marble, which is easily worked, bears a fine polish, and hardens with time. It endures heat, and is manufactured into pipes or calumets, as they are fond of smoking tobacco—a luxury communicated to them by Europeans.

They have no knowledge of simples, or the medicinal virtues of plants; as their country is too barren to produce any: but they generally resort to charms to cure their diseases; of which rheumatism, the flux, and lues venerea, are the principal. They are very superstitious; and have their priests and conjurors; but they are unwilling to make many communications on the subject of their religion. They show their respect for the memory of their departed friends by a long period of mourning; by cutting off their own hair; and never making use of the property of the deceased: they even sacrifice their own on the occasion.

CHAPTER X.

Mouth of the Columbia—Description of the native tribes—Their appearance—Habits.

The first object that meets the eye of a voyager as he approaches the mouth of the Columbia from the Pacific, is a high bluff promontory with precipitous sides, covered with pine trees, and sloping to the mainland, with which it is connected by a low and narrow neck. This is called Cape Disappointment, and stands on the north of the river. The entrance on the south side of the river is terminated by a low, sandy spit of land, stretching into the ocean, and called Point Adams; but, properly speaking, for the distance of thirty or forty miles from its entrance into the sea, it is an estuary, indented by deep bays, so as to vary from three to seven miles in breadth. The distance between the extreme outer ends of Cape Disappointment and Point Adams is about four miles across. This distance is rendered very dangerous and intricate by shoals, forming a sort of flat bar, on which the winds and irregular currents produce foaming and tumultuous breakers, presenting one line of heavy broken water from shore to shore, which, in rough weather, runs out for three miles into the ocean. But the mouth of the river proper becomes narrower, in consequence of the contracting shores of the estuary. The best leading mark for entrance is to bring a projecting point, which looks at a distance like an island, near the higher and northern shore, to bear by compass about east by north, and then to steer for it. But it is dangerous to make any attempt when the breakers are high. Immediately within Cape Disappointment there is a wide open bay which yields good anchorage, and is called Baker's Bay, terminating at Chinook Point.

About fourteen miles from Cape Disappointment, in a southeasterly direction, stands Fort George, on the southern shore, and on an elevation facing the north, terminating with the wide estuary—its sand-bars, and breakers. It was formerly called Astoria, having been founded by Mr. Astor, of whose proceedings I shall speak more hereafter; but it is now only a small outer depôt, belonging to the Company's head-quarters at Fort Vancouver, and kept up for the convenience of the trade with the Indians towards the mouth of the river; and for the salmon fishery. It is now sadly stripped of much of its former importance; the immediate neighbourhood, with the exception of a small garden and farm reserved for the use of the small garrison stationed there, being overrun with weeds and brushwood. There however still exists one memorial of its former *promised* importance—for that importance it never had,—a large tree, spoken of by some writers, lying, as a symbol of the decline of American power, flat and withered on the ground.

The natives, who dwell about the lower parts of the Columbia, may be divided into four tribes—the Clotsops, who reside around Point Adams, on the south side, and are reputed by some the most honest—the Chinooks; Waakiacums; and the Cathlamets; who live on the north side of the river, and around Baker's Bay and other inlets. From the great resemblance between them in person, language, laws, and manners, they all appear to have emanated from one common stock. Though they occasionally can procure the flesh of elks, deer, and the water-fowls of the ponds and rivers, their chief subsistence is fish, chiefly salmon, which abounds in the river, and inlets; and roots, and berries, which the women go *a gipsying* in groups at the proper season to collect in the upper part of the country. This season is a time of hilarity; and the women bepaint their faces and persons with a sort of vermilion paint, partly to protect them from the sun, and partly to present a gay and fantastic appearance. These roots and berries they make into cakes, which they dry in the sun. These cakes, and preserved fish, with an accompaniment of venison, form their winter store, of which they generally have no lack.

These tribes were formerly very numerous and powerful. But they were greatly thinned by the scourge that spread its havoc far and wide among the northern and eastern Indians for many years—the small-pox. After having enjoyed a considerable respite from this visitation, and recruited their force and numbers to some extent, they were again, in 1829, and some subsequent years, attacked by another malady, equally fatal—fever, attended with ague. The strong remedies which they adopted for the cure of this, in opposition to all remonstrance, were nearly as destructive as the malady itself.

They dug a hole in the ground, five feet square, two feet deep below the surface, and raised two feet and a half above it. On the inside it was tightly boarded, and made a sort of compact oven, with a small aperture barely sufficient to admit the insinuation of the body. A number of stones red-hot were thrown in, and the patient (sometimes two or three at a time) immediately after crawled in; and from a bowl poured on the burning stones a quantity of water supplied from the outside, sufficient to produce a high degree of steam. Having remained there until he was nearly parboiled, he crept out again; and, as it was imagined that a violent counter-remedy would produce a wholesome reaction, he plunged at once into the cold stream, on the bank of which this hot vapour-bath was constructed. The remedy generally did its intended work; and something more; it cured the disease, but killed the patient.

As the first visitation of the small-pox affected them peculiarly, it may not be out of place here to say a word about it.

This terrible scourge, which not only thinned this population, but had nearly dispeopled the whole of the northern continent of the native inhabitants, it is now generally agreed, was first introduced by the Americans of the United States; and at first broke out among the tribes residing between the sources of the Missouri and the Mississippi. Thence it spread its devastation northward as far as Athabasca, and the three horns of the great Slave Lake; and westward across the Rocky Mountains through the whole region of the Oregon territories, spreading to a vast distance along the shores of the north Pacific. They at first tried their medicine-men, or conjurors; then, when their medicines and charms were found unavailing, they adopted various expedients, which were as fatal as the disease itself; such as bleeding—blistering—steam and cold baths in quick succession. Then, when they failed in every attempt at cure, they became desperate, and impressed with the belief that it was a visitation from the Great Spirit, who surrendered them up to the Evil One, as a punishment for their wicked courses. The wretched sufferers were deserted, and left to rot and perish, unaided and unpitied. The more hardened and courageous of those who escaped the attack fled to the desert-plains, or the mountains, or the islands of the lakes. Others, more despending, committed suicide, to save themselves from the horrors which they saw the sufferers endure. The bodies of hundreds of men, women, and children used to be seen, afterwards, suspended from the trees, close by depopulated villages, whilst the ground was strewed with putrid and mouldering remains. Numbers of tribes were totally swept away; or reduced to a few scattered and powerless individuals. The remnants of many others united; and formed a new and heterogeneous union.

Whenever a person is attacked with sickness, the medicine-man is sent for; he orders the patient to be placed on his back, and then commences to chaunt a dismal air. To this the patient's friends, who surround him, at intervals reply in chorus; and beat time with a long and short stick, which each carries in his hands, striking one over the other. Generally a person is stationed on the roof during this proceeding, and, with a loud voice, joins the chorus inside; while he keeps time to the air by beating his drum-sticks against the roof. The doctor then kneels, and presses his fists with all his force on the patient's stomach; and, according as the sufferer, under the pain of this operation, cries out, the doctor and the bystanders raise the chaunt louder to drown his voice, and banish the disease within him which is struggling to depart. The doctor having, during the patient's agony, slyly inserted a small white stone into his mouth, he seizes his hands which he joins together, and keeps blowing on them. Thus he continues pressing and blowing until the stone is forced out by the sick man's convulsive efforts.

This he snatches up, and triumphantly produces to the bystanders as the source of the disease, which he assures them is now destroyed. The stone is sometimes enclosed in a piece of cedar bark, and thrown into the fire. The severe hard-pressing and pummelling which the patient is obliged to undergo necessarily produces a considerable change in a short time; and though death not unfrequently follows, yet the general potency of such a mode of treatment is a matter of general belief.

But the white doctor has of late made great inroads on the province of the conjuror, or medicine-man; much of whose occupation is now transferred to the dispensary or the hospital of Fort Vancouver, where a single dose of medicine, or a little phlebotomy, has speedily exorcised the "foul fiend" of the disease. Indeed, many of the customs of these people are fast fading away in their increasing intercourse with civilized men.

On the death of one of these people, the body was formerly wrapped in skins or mats, and disposed in a small canoe (now they sell the skins and use blankets); the deceased's arms, and other articles of general use, being laid beside him. The canoe is then placed on a platform by the river-side, or on rocks out of the reach of the tide; and other mats tied over it. Sometimes these sepulchral canoes are suspended from boughs of trees, six or eight feet from the ground. The canoe in which the body is placed is perforated at the bottom, for the twofold purpose, of letting out the water that the rains may have deposited in it, and of preventing it from ever being used again by the living. When his friends can afford the expense, a larger canoe, reversed, is placed over the lower, to protect it from the rain; and both are firmly tied together. This is his grave. His wives, relations, and slaves go into mourning by cutting their hair; and for some time after his death repair twice a day, at sunrise, and sunset, to a neighbouring wood, to chaunt his funeral dirge. Formerly, on the death of a chief, or other person of wealth and importance, one or more of his slaves (much of an Indian's importance depending on the number of his slaves) was put to death for his use in the next world. But this barbarous superstition has been abolished through the interposition of the Company. The present governor, Dr. M'Laughlin, has for this purpose, as well as for many others in which humanity, and the civilization of the natives, are concerned, made great exertions.

The salmon season, of those tribes towards the mouth of the Columbia, commences in June: and its opening is an epoch looked forward to with much anxiety, and is attended with great formality. They have a public festival, and offer sacrifices. The first salmon caught is a consecrated thing; and is offered to the munificent Spirit who is the giver of plenty. They have a superstitious scruple about the mode of cutting salmon; especially at the commencement of the season, before they have an assurance of a plentiful supply. To cut it crosswise, and to cast the heart into the water, they consider most unlucky, and likely to bring on a scarce season. Hence they are very reluctant to supply the traders at the stations with any until the season is advanced, and then they can calculate on their probable stock; lest an unlucky cross cut by the white men may mar all their prospects. Their mode is to cut it along the back; they take out the back bone, and most studiously avoid throwing the heart into the water. The heart they broil and eat; but will not eat it after sunset. So plentiful is the fish, that they supply the white men with it in abundance. It is now made a lucrative article of foreign trade. Indeed large quantities of it are sent to the Sandwich Islands, and other places.

Their canoes vary in size and form. Some are thirty feet long, and about three feet deep, cut out of a single tree—either fir or white cedar—and capable of carrying twenty persons. They have round thwart pieces from side to side, forming a sort of binders, about three inches in circumference; and their gunwales incline outwards, so as to cast off the surge; the bow and stern being decorated, sometimes, with grotesque figures of men and animals. In managing their canoes, they kneel *two and two* along the bottom, sitting on their heels, and wielding paddles about five feet long; while one sits on the stern and steers, with a paddle of the same kind. The women are equally expert in the management of the canoe, and generally take the helm. It is surprising to see with what fearless unconcern these savages venture in their slight barks on the most tempestuous seas. They seem to ride upon the waves like sea-fowl. Should a surge throw the canoe upon one side and endanger its overturn, those to windward lean over the upper gunwale—thrust their paddles deep into the wave—apparently catch the water, and force it under the canoe; and by this action, not merely regain an equilibrium, but give the vessel a vigorous impulse forward.

They are rather a diminutive race, generally varying in height from five feet to five feet five inches; the women being about six inches shorter. Their legs are generally crooked; their ankles thick; and their feet flat—a deformity caused, no doubt, by their passing so much of their time in childhood, squatting on the calves of their legs and their heels, in the bottom of their canoes—a favourite position, which they retain even when on shore. The women increase this deformity by wearing tight bandages round the lower part of their legs. The faces of both sexes are round—their eyes small and sharp—their noses broad, flat at the top, and thick at the end—their nostrils large—their mouths wide—their lips thick—their teeth short, irregular, and dirty. In addition to these characteristics, the women have their ears slit—the cartilages of their noses perforated—and their heads and bodies saturated with salmon oil. They are inferior in muscular power and activity to the Indians of the plains, who hunt the deer and buffalo, and ride on horseback.

In their early intercourse with the whites, they were but scantily clad; the men being entirely naked in summer; but in winter wearing a small robe made of the skins of animals, and reaching to the middle of the thigh; and sometimes superadding a mantle made of matting, which loosely covered the shoulders. The women wore a similar robe, which reached only to the waist; to which was appended a kind of petticoat, reaching from the waist to the knee—formed of the fibres of cedar bark broken into shreds, or a tissue of silk-grass, twisted and knotted at the ends; but in winter they added a vest of skins. The men carefully eradicated every vestige of a beard, considering it a great deformity. But both sexes allowed the hair of the head, which is coarse and black, and of which they are very proud, to grow to great length; sometimes wearing it plaited—sometimes wound round the head in fanciful tresses. They had conical hats, with narrow rims, woven of bear-grass, or the fibres of cedar bark; and exhibiting, in different colours, various designs—such as representations of canoes, men fishing, &c. They also wore ornaments of bears' claws, elks' tusks, &c., as trophies of hunting exploits. But an intercourse with the white traders soon effected a change in the toilets of both sexes; and they now array themselves in any article of dress, and use any ornament they can procure.

According to the general custom of American savages, when employed in warlike expeditions, they painted their bodies and faces in the most grotesque and hideous manner. Their arms were bows and arrows; spears; and war-clubs two and a half feet long, and double-edged. Some wore a corslet formed of pieces of hard wood, laced together with bear-grass, so as to form a light coat of mail, pliant to the body; and a light casque of cedar bark, leather, or bear-grass, sufficient to protect the head from an arrow or a war-club. A more complete article of defensive armour was a buff jerkin or shirt, of great thickness, made of doublings of elk skin, and reaching to the feet; holes being left for the head and arms. This was perfectly arrow-proof; and was, besides, often believed to be endowed with charmed virtues, imparted by the priests or conjurors of the tribe. It may be observed, that their only offensive weapon is now the common gun.

Their ideas of religion do not differ much from those of the natives of the interior. They believe in an omnipotent and benevolent Spirit, the creator of all things. They represent him as assuming various shapes at pleasure; but generally give him the accompaniment of wings. Though he usually inhabits the sun, he occasionally wings his way through the ethereal regions, and sees all that is doing on earth: and thunders, tempests, and lightning, are the modes in which he exhibits his displeasure. To propitiate his favour, they offer to him, as sacrifices, the first-fruits of their hunting and fishing. They also believe in an evil spirit, who inhabits the fire, who is less powerful than the first, and is occasionally employed to do his services. Therefore they endeavour, in all their undertakings, to propitiate him by frequent offerings.

They have a belief in a future state of rewards and punishments. Those who have well and faithfully discharged all the duties of this life, will go to a mild and happy region, teeming with all the comforts of existence; while those who pursue an opposite course, will be consigned to a cold and dreary region, where bitter fruits and salt water will form their principal means of subsistence. They have also a tradition about the origin of mankind: they believe that man was originally created by the superior deity, but in an imperfect state, being rather a statue of flesh than a perfect being; but a second divinity, less powerful, in pity of his helpless condition, opened his eyes; gave him motion: and taught him all the functions and the arts of life.

They have their priests or conjurors, or medicine-men, who are supposed to be in the confidence of the deities, and the expounders of their will. Each of these has his diminutive wooden idols, under some rude form of a quadruped, or bird, or fish, representing the spirits of the air and fire. These idols are hung round with amulets and native offerings, such as beavers' teeth, bears' and eagles' claws, &c.

I have seen the following account in print: but it is incumbent on me to say, that though I mixed very much with these tribes, and was acquainted with their customs, ceremonies, and superstitions, I neither witnessed myself, nor heard of, such a custom existing among them.

When any chief personage is dangerously ill, the priests are sent for, who bring their idols. They retire into a canoe, to hold a consultation, and if they do not agree as to the malady, or the mode of treatment, they settle the dispute by beating the idols against each other; whichever first loses a tooth or a claw, is considered as confuted. Though this mode of determining the right is not so formidable as the practice of personal combat, or treading the red-hot ploughshare, once practised in Christian Europe, yet it is considered equally efficacious in arriving at a satisfactory conviction.

I am willing to believe that such a custom did exist, and was one of those which the growing intelligence of the natives, in consequence of their intercourse with civilized men, has tended to abolish. Indeed, I am the more inclined to this belief, from my knowledge of the frauds still practised by these crafty conjurors on the credulity of the natives. I will state an example. In times of pretended inspiration, and communion with the Great Spirit, they seize a fleshy part of the body, about the stomach and ribs, in one hand, and plunge a dagger right through the fold, without drawing blood. This act is taken as a proof of their invulnerability—a favour granted by the Great Spirit. I have seen some of them thus gashed all over the front of the body. While I was in charge of Fort George, one of these crafty old priests prepared to perform this operation in my presence. He grasped a handful of his flabby flesh, and drew his dagger. But I instantly checked him; as my acquiescence would be tortured by him to the natives, into my belief that he was under divine protection. Besides, I was responsible for the execution of instructions from head-quarters, to discourage in every way the superstitious and barbarous practices of the people, and the impostures of the priests. I observed that they avoided those parts where they may have a chance of striking through an artery.

There prevails a singular custom among all the tribes about the lower part of the Columbia—the flattening of the forehead, and compression of the whole head; which gives them a hideous appearance. Immediately after birth the infant is laid in an oblong wooden trough, by way of cradle, with moss under it. The end on which the head reposes is raised higher than the rest. A padding is then placed on the infant's forehead with a piece of cedar bark over it; it is pressed down by cords, which pass through holes on each side of the trough. As the tightening of the padding, and the pressing of the head to the board, is gradual, the process is said not to be attended with much pain.

The appearance of the infant, however, while under it, is shocking: its little black eyes seem ready to start from their sockets—the mouth exhibits all the indications of internal convulsion; and it clearly appears that the face is gradually undergoing a process of unnatural configuration. About a year's pressure is sufficient to produce the desired effect. The head is ever after completely flattened; and the upper part of it, on the crown, seldom exceeds an inch in width. This is deemed a mark of beauty and distinction, like small and crippled feet among the Chinese ladies of rank.

All their slaves, whom they purchase from the neighbouring tribes, have round heads. Every child of a slave, if not adopted by a member of the tribe, must be left to nature, and therefore grow up with a round head. This deformity is, consequently, a mark of their freedom. On examining the skulls of these people several medical men have declared, that nothing, short of ocular demonstration, could have convinced them of the possibility of moulding the human head into such a form.

Though the Indians about the head-waters of the Columbia, and in the other regions bordering on the Rocky Mountains, are called "Flat Heads," the name does not result from such a characteristic deformity, for all these people have *round* heads; but appears to have been originally given them from caprice, or from an observance of some similarity in disposition or habit, between them and the savages of the coast at the mouth of the river. The best supported opinion is, that they were of the same original stock with the lower tribes, but discontinued the custom.

They have a great variety of games, which they pursue often with such ardour, that they would gamble away every thing they possess—even their wives and children. One of their usual games is this: One man takes a small stone, which he shifts from hand to hand repeatedly, all the while humming a low monotonous air. The bet being made, according as the adversary succeeds in grasping the hand which contains the stone, he wins or loses. The game is generally played with great fairness; and the loser submits with the most philosophical resignation. They are also consummate thieves, and proud of their dexterity. He who is frequently successful gains applause and popularity; but the clumsy thief, who is detected, is scoffed at and despised.

So we find among the modern savages, on the shores of the Pacific, the same passion for gambling which, Tacitus says, existed among the aboriginal Germans; and the same merit attached to dexterous and successful stealing which existed among the ancient Spartans. Like the Spartans, too, they considered drunkenness a great degradation,—a vice fit only for slaves. On one occasion the son of Comcomly, chief of the Chinooks, was induced to drink at the factory until he became intoxicated. He then played the most extravagant pranks. He was sent home in that state: and the old chief went to the factory in a state of high rage, and reproached the people there for having degraded his son, and exposed him to the laughter and contempt of his slaves. But, however, they deem it, in general, no degradation now to get drunk, when they can.

This noted chief, Comcomly, was buried with great ceremony, in a canoe near Fort George, in 1831. His body was afterwards taken out of the canoe, for greater security, by his relations, and placed in a long box, in a lonely part of the woods. But the precaution was idle. His head is now in the possession of some eminent physician in Edinburgh; and, strange to say, although he had been buried about five years, his skin was quite dry, and not decayed. It required a very sharp knife to penetrate the skin; and his hair was still on his head.

Marriage among them is a matter for previous negotiation, and attended with solemnity. When a young man has made his choice, and obtained consent, the parents, or other natural guardians of the girl, are next to be consulted. These are to receive a certain quantity of presents,—slaves, axes, kettles, trinkets, &c. When the amount is agreed on, they repair to the house intended for the young couple, to which the most respectable inhabitants of the village are invited. The young man, having distributed the presents, receives, in the style of the heroes of the Homeric age, an equal, often a greater number, of presents from the girl's relations. Then the bride, decorated with various ornaments, is led forth by a few old women, and presented to the bridegroom, who receives her as his wife. The company, after partaking of hospitality, and wishing the young couple every happiness—a numerous progeny, abundance, and peace, retire. Though the union is generally lasting, it is not indissoluble; as a man may, for infidelity, repudiate his wife; who is, after that, at liberty to take another husband. Polygamy is not only allowed, but is a mark of distinction. The greater the number of wives a man can maintain the higher is he esteemed. In fact, the respectability and influence of the chief depends on the number of wives, slaves, and other property which he possesses; and his election to the office mainly depends on this qualification. Though the wives generally live in harmony together, the first wife takes precedence of all the others, and is considered as mistress of the house.

They regulate the prices of their articles by *haiqua*, which is a milk-white round shell of extreme hardness, found in the neighbourhood of Nootka Sound. It varies in length from one to four inches, and is about half an inch thick—hollow, slightly curved, and tapering a little towards the ends. It is highly estimated, the longest being the most valuable.

It resembles the top shank of a common clay smoking-pipe. They are valued in proportion to the number that, when ranged on a string, passing through their hollow tubes, extend a fathom's length. Forty to the fathom, is supposed to be the fixed standard of excellence and worth: for instance, forty which make a fathom are worth nearly double fifty which make a fathom. There extreme fragility, lightness, tenuity, and delicacy of colour, are what appear to give them their importance. They are thus caught in Nootka Sound, and along Vancouver's Island: —a piece of deer flesh, or of fish, is dropped from a line to the bottom: this they cling to; and they are then drawn up, and carefully gutted and preserved.

Sturgeon fishing.—Sturgeon are caught by the Chinooks in the following manner. To the line—which is made from the twisted roots of trees—is attached a large hook, made of hard wood. This is lowered some twenty feet below the surface of the water. The canoes are not more than ten feet long; manned by never more than two, sometimes only by one; and slowly drift down the river with the current. When the sturgeon bites, and they have him fast, the line is hauled up gently until they get his head to the water's edge. He then receives a blow from a heavy wooden mallet, which kills him. The gunwale of the canoe is lowered to the verge of the water; and the sturgeon, though weighing upwards of three hundred pounds, is, by the single effort of one Indian, jerked into the boat.

A few months since, I saw a paragraph in most of the largely circulated papers, stating that a sturgeon weighing three or four hundred pounds had been caught in the river Thames; and that a host of people, amounting to two or three hundred, were employed in killing this fish. I thought that the old saying, of nine tailors making a man, was exceeded in this case; as it appears that it took three hundred Englishmen to make one Chinook sturgeon-catcher.

Their houses are constructed of wood, and vary in length from twenty to seventy feet, and in breadth from fifteen to twenty-five feet. Two or more posts of split timber, according to the number of partitions, are sunk firmly into the ground, and rise upwards to the height of fifteen or eighteen feet. They are grooved at the top so as to receive the ends of a round beam or pole, stretching from one end to the other, and forming the upper point of the roof, from one end of the building to the other. On each side of this range is placed another row much lower, being about five feet high, which forms the eaves of the house. But as the building is often sunk to the depth of four or five feet in the ground, the eaves come very near the surface of the earth. Smaller pieces of timber are then extended, by pairs, in the form of rafters from the lower to the higher beam, and are fastened at both ends by cords of cedar bark. On these rafters two or three ranges of small poles are placed horizontally, and in the same way fastened with similar cords. The sides are then made, with a range of wide boards sunk a small distance into the ground, with the upper ends projecting above the poles of the eaves, to which they are secured by a beam passing outside, parallel with the eave poles, and tied by cords of cedar bark passing through the holes made in the boards at certain distances. The gable ends and partitions are formed in the same way; being fastened by beams on the outside parallel with the rafters. The roof is then covered with a double range of thin boards, excepting a space of two or three feet in the centre, which serves for a chimney. The entrance is by a hole cut through the boards, and just large enough to admit the body.

The largest houses are divided by partitions, and three or four families may be found residing in a one-roomed house. In the centre of each room is a space, six or eight feet square, sunk to the depth of twelve inches below the rest of the floor, and enclosed by four pieces of square timber; here they make the fire, which is of wood and pine bark. The partitions in the houses are intended to separate different families. Around the fire-place mats are spread, and serve as seats by day, and frequently as beds at night; there is, however, a more permanent bed made, by fixing in two, or sometimes three, sides of a room, posts reaching from the roof to the floor, and at the distance of four feet from the wall. From these posts to the wall one or two ranges of boards are placed, so as to form shelves, on which they either sleep or stow their various articles of merchandise. In short, they are like berths in a ship. The uncured fish is hung in the smoke of their fires; as is also the flesh of the elk when they are fortunate enough to procure any.

Their culinary articles consist of a large square kettle, made of cedar wood, a few platters, and spoons made of ash. Their mode of cooking is expeditious. Having put a quantity of water into the kettle, they throw into it several hot stones, which quickly cause the water to boil; then the fish or flesh is put in; the steam is kept from evaporating by a small mat thrown over the kettle. By this mode a large salmon would be boiled in twenty minutes, and meat in a proportionably short space of time. They occasionally roast their fish and flesh on small wooden skewers.

For the felling and cutting of trees—sometimes from thirty to forty feet in circumference—for building their houses, and forming their canoes, they had not, previous to their intercourse with the whites, even an axe. For such immense work their only instruments consisted of a chisel, formed out of an old file; a kind of oblong stone used as a hammer, and a mallet made of spruce-tree knot, well oiled and hardened by the action of the fire.

They are very ingenious in the construction of their nets, which are made of a sort of wild hemp, sometimes called silk-grass, found on the upper borders of the Columbia; or of the fibres of the roots of trees; or the inner ligaments of the bark of the white cedar. These nets are of different kinds, for the different kinds of fishery—the straight net for the larger fish in deep water; and the scooping or dipping-net for the smaller fish in the shallower waters. They also use a curious sort of many-pronged spear, for drawing up small fish. This is a pole set all round with numerous short wooden little spikes. This they work along against the current from the canoe, and against the small fish, that swim onwards in dense masses. At every take-up of this spear, which is done in quick succession, it is found filled with fishes impaled on those sharp spikes. In their nets they use stones in place of lead; and their superior usefulness and adaptation to the fishery of the Columbia, over the nets of the civilized white, may be shown from the following fact.

A Mr. Wyeth, of Boston, having heard much of the salmon fishery in the Columbia, and thinking it would afford a profitable trading speculation, chartered a vessel, in 1835; and on his way took a number of the Sandwich Islanders as fishermen; supplying himself also with a cargo of fishing nets, and a great variety of other fishing apparatus, on the most approved principles. On arriving at the Columbia he set vigorously to work, dead sure of making a fortune. But his nets were totally unfit for the occupation; and his exotic fishermen, notoriously familiar as they are with the watery element, were no match for the natives, pursuing their natural occupation in almost their indigenous element, and so familiar with the seasons, the currents, the localities, and all the many other circumstances that insure success. He set up for a fur trader as well, and imagined that he would make up his loss in competition against the savages by his successful competition against the Company. But his trappers were not more successful than his fishermen; although the Company afforded him every facility; and, he was obliged to quit the country a disappointed adventurer, having disposed of his goods and chattels to the Company, who, according to his own written statement, treated him with generosity. To this fact, which I now state, Mr. Washington Irving bears honourable testimony.

the dust and vermin and coarse hairs, previous to exportation.

Six hundred yards below the fort, and on the bank of the river, there is a neat village, of about sixty well-built wooden houses, generally constructed like those within the fort; in which the mechanics, and other servants of the Company, who are in general Canadians and Scotchmen, reside with their families. They are built in rows, and present the appearance of small streets. They are kept in a clean and orderly manner. Here there is an hospital, in which the invalided servants of the Company, and, indeed, others who may wish to avail themselves of it, are treated with the utmost care. This is attended by Dr. Tolmie, the resident surgeon of the fort.

Many of the officers of the Company marry half-breed women. These discharge the several duties of wife and mother with fidelity, cleverness, and attention. They are, in general, good housewives; and are remarkably ingenious as needlewomen. Many of them, besides possessing a knowledge of English, speak French correctly, and possess other accomplishment; and they sometimes attend their husbands, on their distant and tedious journeys and voyages. These half-breed women are of a superior class; being the daughters of chief traders and factors, and other persons high in the Company's service, by Indian women, of a superior descent or of superior personal attractions. Though they generally dress after the English fashion, according as they see it used by the English wives of the superior officers, yet they retain one peculiarity—the leggin or gaiter, which is made (now that the tanned deer-skin has been superseded) of the finest, and most gaudy-coloured cloth, beautifully ornamented with beads.

The lower classes of the Company's servants marry native women, from the tribes of the upper country; where the women are round-headed, and beautiful. These, too, generally speaking, soon learn the art of useful housewifery with great adroitness and readiness; and they are encouraged and rewarded in every way by the Company, in their efforts to acquire domestic economy and comfort. These too, imitate, in costume, the dress of the officers' wives, as much as they can; but from their necessities of position, which expose them more to wet and drudgery, they retain the mocassin, in place of adopting the low-quartered shoe. This is made of deer-skin, dressed under a peculiar process; the most important of which is seasoning over warm smoke, by which the leather is rendered perfectly waterproof. These mocassins are so elastic that they can be drawn on like a stocking; and so light that they serve the purposes of high shoe and stocking together. They are open partly down the front; one side lapping over the other; and fastened with a long strip of the same leather—drawn upwards—passing two or three times round the leg.

The half-breeds are a very well-featured race; and the men are remarkably ingenious, athletic, and vigorous. In horsemanship they are singularly adroit. Nor is this to be wondered at; for in fact they have been reared from their extremest youth to the management of the horse, accompanying their parents, generally, in their trapping journeys over the plains and hills on horseback. One of these practised half-breeds would receive applause from Alexander of Macedon himself, or the best tutored equestrian at Astley's. He would mount the wildest and most high-mettled Bucephalus of the plains—give him full play over level and rough—high and low—river and hill, until he brought him back as tame as a mouse.

The cleverest fellow, of this school, I ever saw was Joseph M'Loughlin, a natural son of the present *governor*, by a half-breed woman. He was a person of some little distinction from the accident of his birth, independently of his astonishing equestrian capabilities. In seeing his feats, when managing a wild stallion, that galloped and plunged to desperation,—clinging to the animal, as if he were an inseparable part of him—playfully tossing his bare head over the upreared head of the horse, while his breech clung to his back with the tenacity of wax; and his heels seemed glued to his ribs; with his hands fastened in the mane; he completely explained to me the fabulous stories which I read in my boyhood of the *Centaurs*; for I at once saw that there was some ground for the old pictures of poets and painters, in drawing a compound animal—man and horse.

The mode generally adopted in catching the wild horse is by the lasso, or noose rope. An experienced and well-mounted man, riding a practised horse, gallops up to a herd, holding his head as close to his horse's flowing mane as possible, for a disguise. Thus he is enabled to approach the herd. The herd, on seeing him fully, then scamper off, from an instinctive dread of danger. But he gallops on until he comes within effective range, and has taken his aim. He then lets fly his noose, which is at the end of a long rope, kept previously coiled up. This is discharged like a stone from a sling; and is thrown with such unerring precision, that the horse's neck is caught in the noose. He is at once prostrated. The rider dismounts and fetters him. He is soon afterwards tamed. Sometimes the horses are thus caught when roaming at large, in the wide and open plain; but the more general custom now is for a number of horsemen to scare them into a kind of enclosed park, where the process of catching is rendered more easy and expeditious. Sometimes these ropes are made of the coarse, strong hemp of the country; but generally of thongs from the tanned buffalo-hide, as this substance, from its superior weight, strength, and elasticity, is discharged from the hand with greater force, and effects its purpose with speedier and surer effect.

Attached to the fort there is a magnificent farm, consisting of about three thousand acres; of which about fifteen hundred acres have been already brought to the highest state of tillage. It stretches behind the fort, and on both sides, along the banks of the river. It is fenced into beautiful corn-fields—vegetable-fields—orchards—gardens—and pasture-fields, which are interspersed with dairy-houses, shepherds' and herdsmen's cottages. It is placed under the most judicious management: and neither expense nor labour has been spared to bring it to the most perfect cultivation. There is a large grist-mill, and a threshing-mill, which are worked by horse-power; and a saw-mill worked by water-power. All kinds of grain and vegetables, and many species of fruits, are produced there in abundance, and of superior quality. The grain crops are produced without manure; and the wheat crop, especially, is represented by practical farmers to be wonderful. It must, however, be observed, that Indian corn does not thrive there so well as in other soils. But this is not considered as any matter for regret or loss. Melons and grapes grow there remarkably well. But perhaps the greatest curiosity of all is to be seen in the dwarf apple-trees. These grow thickly, and are so loaded with fruit of the best quality, that it is necessary to prop up the branches to prevent them from breaking: the apples grow packed together, resembling onions fastened in rows on a string. The whole farm is in charge of a most experienced farmer, Mr. G. Allen, a Scotchman. There is also a principal gardener, Mr. Bruce, a Scotchman. Mr. Allen having been placed as agent for the Company at the Sandwich Islands, Mr. George Roberts, whose skill and zeal pointed him out to the Company as one worthy of promotion and confidence, was selected as the fittest successor to Mr. Allen in his important post.

Besides this farm, which they are every day extending, they have commenced farming on a large scale on the Cowilitze, to the north; Umpqua, to the south; and in other parts of the territory, where they have established posts, the produce of all which they use for exportation both to the Russian stations, in Kamtschatka (as they entered into a contract with the Russians, in 1839, to supply their posts in those regions with provisions at fixed prices), and to the islands in the Southern Pacific; and to British and American whalers, and to other merchant ships.

They also keep scores of woodcutters, employed to fell timber, which is sawed up in large quantities—three thousand feet a day, and regularly shipped for the Sandwich Islands, and other foreign parts. And as they can afford to sell the goods purchased in England under a contract of old standing, together with the productions of the territory and their own farms,—fish, beef, mutton, pork, timber, &c., at nearly half the American price, they are likely to engross the whole trade of the Pacific, as they do already the trade of the Oregon; especially since they command all the ports and safe inlets of the country. This the Americans feel and declare; and it is this that whets their cupidity, and excites their jealousy and hatred.

Trapping-Parties leaving Vancouver.—These parties are some weeks preparing for the mountains and prairies. The blacksmiths are busily engaged making beaver-traps for the trappers—the storekeepers making up articles for trade, and equipping the men (as each of them takes from the store every requisite article), the clerk in charge of the provision-store (generally called, after the French, *depence*), packing up provisions for them, to last until they get into hunting-ground—the clerk in charge of the farm providing horses, and other requisite articles.

The party generally consists of about fifty or sixty men—most of them the Company's servants—others, free hunters. The servants have a stated salary, while the freemen receive so much per skin. Previous to leaving the fort for their arduous adventure, they are allowed a small quantity of rum per man; and they generally enjoy a grand holiday and feast the night previous to starting. Each man has a certain number of horses, sufficient to carry his equipment. The free trappers generally provide their own animals. Both the Company's servants and the freemen frequently take their wives and families with them: the women are very useful on the expedition, in preparing meals and other necessaries for their husbands during their absence from the camp. In summer and winter, whether they have a sort of travelling camp or a fixed residence, they select the localities that most abound in fur-bearing animals.

Though a party may be obliged, from a variety of circumstances, to winter in the plains, or in the recesses of the mountains, on the borders of lakes or rivers, some numbers of it return to the fort at *the fall*, with the produce of the season's hunt, and report progress; and return to the camp with a reinforcement of necessary supplies. Thus the Company are enabled to acquire a minute knowledge of the country and the natives, and extend their power and authority over both.

Certain gentlemen of the Company have been appointed, by act of Parliament, justices of the peace; who are empowered to entertain prosecutions for minor offences, and to impose punishment—to arrest and send to Canada criminals of a higher order for trial; and also to try, and give judgment in civil suits, where the amount in dispute does not exceed £200; and, in case of non-payment, to imprison the debtor, at their own forts, or in the jails of Canada.

Mr. M'Kay, one of the principal officers in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's trapping-party in the Snake country, is a gentleman of great intelligence and natural astuteness, and also of good feeling; and is quite as much at home in the prairies and wilderness as he is in a fort. I recollect a story related by him, in "bachelors' hall." He was speaking of a son of a Mr. Bird, a gentleman some years ago in the service of the Company. This young Bird (and a wild *bird* he proved to be) received a fair education, and could converse in French and English.

CHAPTER XI.

Fort Vancouver—its farm establishment.

Fort Vancouver is the head-quarters, establishment, or grand depôt of the Company, west of the Rocky Mountains. It is situated near Point Vancouver (so called from the celebrated English navigator and discoverer in those seas) on the northwest of the Columbia, on a large, level plain, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and ninety miles from the Pacific. The river in front of it is seventeen hundred yards wide, and six fathoms deep. The whole country round is covered with noble woods, consisting of many kinds of valuable timber; such as cedar, pine, &c., interspersed with open and fertile spaces. It was founded in 1824, by Governor Simpson; as the locality was more convenient for trade—had a larger and richer tract of land for cultivation—and afforded a more convenient landing-place for cargoes from the ships, than the former depôt—Fort George (or Astoria)—which lay near the mouth of the river.

Fort Vancouver is then the grand mart and rendezvous for the Company's trade and servants on the Pacific. Thither all the furs and other articles of trade collected west of the Rocky Mountains, from California to the Russian territories, are brought from the several other forts and stations: and from thence they are shipped to England. Thither too all the goods brought from England for traffic—the various articles in woollens and cottons—in grocery—in hardware—ready-made clothes—oils and paints—ship stores, &c., are landed; and from thence they are distributed to the various posts of the interior, and along the northern shores by sailing vessels, or by boat, or pack-horses, as the several routes permit, for distribution and traffic among the natives, or for the supply of the Company's servants. In a word, Fort Vancouver is the grand emporium of the Company's trade, west of the Rocky Mountains; as well within the Oregon Territory as beyond it, from California to Kamtschatka.

The present governor is Dr. John M'Loughlin. He is described by American writers, whom he entertained in his usual style, as a portly, dignified-looking man, almost six feet high, with a florid complexion—gray hair—large blue eyes—an open and benevolent expression of countenance—bland and courteous manners—a generous and most hospitable disposition. This I know to be all true. He has been in the service of the Company from his youth, to his own credit and their great benefit. He has mounted up to his present high office—the highest—by his diligence, integrity, and skill. He is thoroughly familiar with the whole trade, in all its ramifications and minutiæ. He has contributed greatly to bring it to its present high state, and is making every effort to advance it farther. He was a very influential partner in the Northwest Company, before its junction with the Hudson's Bay Company. During his occasional absence his duties are discharged by his worthy deputy, J. Douglas, Esq.

The fort is in the shape of a parallelogram, about two hundred and fifty yards long by one hundred and fifty broad, enclosed by a sort of wooden wall, made of pickets, or large beams firmly fixed in the ground, and closely fitted together, twenty feet high, and strongly secured on the inside by buttresses. At each angle there is a bastion, mounting two twelve-pounders, and in the centre there are some eighteen-pounders; but from the subdued and pacific character of the natives, and the long absence of all apprehension, these cannon have become useless.

The area within is divided into two courts, around which are arranged about forty neat, strong wooden buildings, one story high, designed for various purposes—such as offices, apartments for the clerks, and other officers—warehouses for furs, English goods, and other commodities—workshops for the different mechanics; carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, wheelwrights, tinners, &c.; in all of which there is the most diligent and unceasing activity and industry. There is also a schoolhouse and chapel, and a powder magazine, built of brick and stone.

In the centre stands the governor's residence, which is two stories high—the dining hall, and the public sitting-room. All the clerks and officers, including the chaplain and physician, dine together in the hall, the governor presiding. The dinner is of the most substantial kind, consisting of several courses. Wine is frequently allowed, but no spirituous liquors. After grace has been said, the company break up. Then most of the party retire to the public sitting-room, called "Bachelor's Hall," or the *smoking-room*, to amuse themselves as they please, either in smoking, reading, or telling and listening to stories of their own, and others' curious adventures. Sometimes there is a great influx of company, consisting of the chief traders from the outposts, who arrive at the fort on business, and the commanders of vessels. These are gala times after dinner, and there is a great deal of amusement, but always kept under strict discipline, and regulated by the strictest propriety. There is, on no occasion, cause for *ennui*, or a lack of anecdote and interesting narrative, or indeed of any intellectual amusement; for if smoking and story-telling be irksome, then there is the horse ready to mount, and the rifle prepared. The voyageur and the trapper, who have traversed thousands of miles, through wild and unfrequented regions, and the mariner, who has circumnavigated the globe, may be found grouped together, smoking, joking, singing, and story-telling, and in every way banishing *dull care*, till the period of their again setting out for their respective destinations arrive.

The smoking room, or "Bachelor's Hall," presents the appearance of an armoury and a museum. All sorts of weapons, and dresses, and curiosities of civilized and savage life, and of the various implements for the prosecution of the trade, may be seen there.

The mechanics, and other servants of the establishment, do not dine in the hall, or go to the smoking-room.

The clerks, after passing through many stages of trust and emolument, are promoted to the post of chief trader: after that to the post of chief factor; then they ascend to become shareholders of the Company, and governors of forts. But all the gradations of promotion are, in general, dependent on skill, industry, and integrity. Indeed, throughout the various ramifications and degrees of this vast, and wide-spread commercial association, there is less favouritism than could be expected, and less than in any other mercantile institution: almost all the patronage of the Company is bestowed as the reward of merit, and long service. The precision, order, and regularity with which the various operations are carried on, together with the strict decorum and sobriety observed, are entitled to the highest commendation; and excite the wonder of the Americans!

The school is for the benefit of the half-breed children of the officers and servants of the Company, and of many orphan children of Indians who have been in the Company's employment. They are taught English (sometimes French), writing, arithmetic, and geography; and are subsequently either apprenticed to traders in Canada; or kept in the Company's service.

The front square is the place where the Indians and trappers deposit their furs, and other articles, and make their sales, &c. There may be seen, too, great numbers of men sorting and packing the various goods; and scores of Canadians beating and cleaning the furs from

He was some time in the Company's service; but, finding the work too hard for him, joined the Blackfoot Indians, and was made a chief; and he took several daughters of chiefs for his wives, and became a man of some note and respect. He received, amongst the trappers, the nickname of Jemmy Jock. He had then been living with the Indians twenty years, and was much disliked by the American trapping-parties; in fact, it has been said that the Americans did once offer five hundred dollars for his head, as they supposed he had been a leader amongst a tribe of Blackfeet when an American party was cut off by them.

Mr. M'Kay said, he was once encamped in the plain, and imagined that the Blackfeet must be in the vicinity of the camp, by various marks. He accordingly, at night, gave strict orders to the Canadians on watch to keep a good look-out; which they did, with rifle in hand. But this Jemmy Jock, dressed as a Canadian voyageur, managed to enter the camp unobserved—walked up to the chief man on watch; and, addressing him in Canadian-French, said that he had "received orders that the horses which were in the camp should be turned out to graze." The watchman, taking it for granted that the order came from M'Kay, ordered the horses to be let out. But before long the camp was roused by the loud whoop of the Blackfeet: some of the horses were mounted; and others driven off before the marauding-party; the poor trappers being left to make the best of their way through the plains as they could. Sometimes in travelling through the plains the Company's trappers fall in with a letter, tied to a stick, left by this humorous half-breed, to announce that he has camped at this spot with his party a short time previous—sometimes giving them good information; and sometimes intending to mislead, and play them a frolicksome or mischievous trick.

Rifle-shots.—It is generally a custom amongst first-rate rifle-shots, in the service, to have a favourite rifle.

This rifle always being practised with, they are sure to hit the mark. It is frequently seen, that, by a good rifleman, a duck's head is knocked off at one hundred and twenty yards. This Mr. M'Kay is an excellent shot. He says that he generally shoots the bear in the mouth, to save the skin. During the leisure hours in the summer months, at the fort, after business hours, the officers often amuse themselves at rifle-shooting; and at eighty yards, the bull's-eye is seldom missed: and once or twice a week, the riding horses are generally brought into the fort for the officers to recreate themselves with a ride.

Here we had an old and favourite servant, who was cook, and whose name was *Overy*, a Canadian. He was never more happy than when he was able to play off his pranks with any of the sailors, when a vessel lay in the river. At one time, on the arrival of a vessel from England, there was on board a curious, eccentric old boatswain, who had, previously to joining the Company's service, been on board a man-of-war. The cook and the boatswain became very familiar; and the cook was invited on board the vessel to dine with the boatswain. The invitation was accepted; and the compliment was returned on the Sunday following. Overy not knowing what to get good enough for his dear and hospitable friend, the boatswain, bethought him of a dog, which is a favourite dish amongst Canadian voyageurs. The old boatswain ate heartily of it, as did the cook. After he had done, the cook inquired how he had enjoyed his dinner: he said it was beautiful. He then asked him whether he knew what he had been dining on: he said he supposed from a goat. "Yes," says the cook, "you have been eating from a goat with von long tail, that don't like grass or heather." "How is that?" inquired the boatswain. "Vy you see," replied the cook, "it was my best dog you have dined from." The old boatswain stormed and swore; and then ran, as fast as possible, to the vessel, to get a little rum to lay his stomach. He vowed that he never again wished to dine with a Canadian cook, or eat pet dogs.

In 1829, a beautiful brig—the William and Ann—sent from England for the Company's use—in entering the river, was driven on a shoal, between Cape Disappointment and Point Adams. A report was given to the gentleman in charge of Fort George that a vessel was wrecked on the bar. A search was immediately made; and it was found that the report was true. A boat was found driven on shore: and the stem had been cut as if by an axe. The body of the captain alone was found. The whole of the crew perished; and it was generally supposed that some of them had got on shore, but were destroyed by the Clatsop Indians, in whose possession were found numerous articles which had drifted on shore. In fact, they had a great quantity of the cargo, with several puncheons of rum, buried under the sands on the beach. The governor of Fort Vancouver sent down an interpreter, and several men, to endeavour to gain information respecting the lost ship; and to get from the natives the things which had drifted on shore. But the natives merely sent impertinent messages, and an old broken paper-framed looking-glass; and told him to be contented with that. This strengthened the governor's suspicion, and he thought part of the crew had been murdered. To gain the articles in possession of the Indians, he was obliged to send a strong party of armed men amongst them; and drive them from their village into the woods, before they could gain the articles. From that hour to this, the natives have shrunk from tampering with any thing under the Company's protection.

The year following, a splendid brig—the Isabella—commanded by Captain Ryan, shared the same fate. She drove upon the sands: but the whole of the crew were saved; and, by the prompt exertions of Dr. M'Loughlin, and the officers of Fort Vancouver, great part of the cargo was saved: but the vessel went to pieces; and was drifted, piecemeal, to sea.

A little time previous to my leaving the country, Michel Laframboise, the gentleman in charge of the trapping parties hunting the plains near California, brought news of an American party having been cut off. This party had left the Wallamette settlement; and were proceeding to California, to purchase cattle. Some Americans, previous to this party, had been on the same route, and an Indian had been murdered by them. But Indians always wait for revenge—so did they in this instance. The Indians, finding that this party consisted of Americans *only*, thought it offered them their long-looked-for opportunity of revenge. They had, it was supposed, been watching the Americans on their journey, for days; and knowing that these had to cross a high mountain, where there was but a narrow and crooked path to guide them; which was lined by rocks and bushes on each side, selected this as the spot of attack. The path was so narrow, that their horses were obliged to walk single, one after the other. After the party had gone some distance up the mountain, the Indians completely closed them in, and let fly their arrows and guns; killing both horses and men. The Americans, having but little chance of defence or retaliation, as the Indians were sheltered by the rocks and bushes, were slain unresistingly. One little half-breed boy, named Johnson, after three arrows had pierced him, was in the act of firing his gun, when a fourth arrow struck him in the throat and killed him. Two men only were saved to tell the tale.

On one occasion an American vessel, Captain Thompson, was in the Columbia, trading furs and salmon. The vessel had got aground, in the upper part of the river, and the Indians, from various quarters, mustered with the intent of cutting the Americans off, thinking that they had an opportunity of revenge, and would thus escape the censure of the Company. Dr. M'Loughlin, the governor of Fort Vancouver, hearing of their intention, immediately despatched a party to their rendezvous;

and informed them that if they injured one American, it would be just the same offence as if they had injured one of his servants, and they would be treated equally as enemies. This stunned them; and they relinquished their purpose; and all retired to their respective homes. Had not this come to the governor's ears the Americans must have perished.

Mode of curing salmon.—As soon as a cargo of salmon is caught, the natives bring it to the trading post in their canoes. A number of Indian women are employed by the trader, seated on the beach, with knives, ready to cut up the fish. The salmon are counted from each Indian, for which a ticket is given for the quantity, large or small. After the whole of the salmon are landed, the Indians congregate around the trading shop for their payment, and receive ammunition, baize, tobacco, buttons, &c.

The women employed by the trader commence cutting out the backbones, and cut off the heads of the salmon. They are then taken to the salter, and placed in a large hogshead, with a quantity of coarse salt. They remain there for several days, until they become quite firm. The pickle produced from them is boiled in a large copper kettle, and the blood, which floats by the boiling process to the top, is skimmed off, leaving the pickle perfectly clear. The salmon are then taken from the hogshead and packed in tierces, with a little more salt; the tierces are then headed up, and laid upon their bilge, or widest part, leaving the bunghole open; the pickle is next poured in, until the tierce becomes full; a circle of clay, about four inches high, is then made round the bunghole, into which the oil from the salmon rises. This oil is skimmed off, and, according as the salmon imbibes the pickle, more pickle is poured in, so as to keep the liquid sufficiently on the surface, and afford facility for skimming off the oil. After the oil ceases to rise to the circle round the bunghole, the salmon is then supposed to be sufficiently prepared; the clay circle is cleared away, and the hole is bunged up. Salmon, so cured, will keep good for three years. This, soaked in a little water for a few hours previous to using, is delicious eating; but, of course, much of its deliciousness depends on its original quality when taken, and its freshness when put in salt.

The dogs are very fond of the raw salmon. The Indian dogs, which are a sort of half-wolf breed, with sharp nose and long bushy tail, eat it with perfect safety; but it is fatal to English dogs. I lost three valuable dogs in this way, before I was aware of its fatal effects. They slunk into the woods, and pined away until they died. On opening them, I found the gall bladder as hard as a stone.

The Company have already established the following principal trading forts or stations within the limits of the territory, independently of minor and temporary posts, and several migratory establishments on the frontiers of California, and the country extending towards the confines of the United States. In short, it may be said, that they have taken possession of every district within the whole region; which, throughout its wild and rugged parts, as well as its fertile parts, is dotted with their forts and establishments; and they exercise unrestrained trade and intercourse with all the native tribes; whereas the Americans, with the exception of a few missionary and agricultural establishments, have scarcely any possession or hold of the country.

They possess, then, the following principal posts:—Fort Vancouver, on the north bank of the Columbia, ninety miles from the ocean, and in latitude 45½°, longitude 122° 30′; Fort George (formerly Astoria), near the mouth of this river; Fort Nasqually, on Puget's Sound, latitude 47°; Fort Langley, at the outlet of Frazer's River, latitude 49° 25′; Fort M'Loughlin, on Milbank Sound, latitude 52°; Fort Simpson, on Dundas Island, latitude 54½°; Frazer's Fort, Fort James, M'Leod's Fort, Chilcotin, and Fort Alexandria, on Fraser's River, and its branches, between 51° and 54½° parallels of latitude; Thompson's Fort, on Thompson's River, a tributary of Fraser's, latitude 50°; Kootanie Fort, on Flatbow River; Flathead Fort, on Flathead River; Fort Hall and Fort Boisais, on the Saptin, or Snake River; Fort Colville, and Fort O'Kanagan, on the Columbia, above its junction with the Saptin; Fort Perces, or Wallawalla, a few miles below the junction; Fort M'Kay, at the mouth of the Umqua River, latitude 43° 30′, and longitude 124° W.

In addition to these establishments, they have an immense number of boats and canoes, for trading on all the lakes, and rivers, and streams of the interior, by means of which they hold communication with their possessions east of the Rocky Mountains, and carry up the communication to Hudson's Bay, along a distance of several thousand miles. Besides these, they have powerful steamers, heavily armed, which run along the coast, and among its bays and inlets, for the double purpose of commerce and protection against aggressions in those seas. They have likewise several sailing vessels for these purposes, varying from two to five hundred tons burden, completely armed and equipped, besides barges for the conveyance of goods to the lower part of the river, and other craft, during the salmon season, for the conveyance of supplies to the fishing stations on the parts of the river unnavigable to the larger craft.

CHAPTER XII.

Wappatoo Island and Wallamette Settlement.

Five miles below Fort Vancouver, and on the opposite, or southern side, there is an island called Wappatoo Island. It lies between the two entrances of the river

Wallamette, which flows into the Columbia, and is nearly triangular. Its northern side, facing the Columbia, is about fifteen miles long; the side bounded by the eastern branch, or mouth of the Wallamette, is about seven miles long; and the side bounded by the western branch of this river is about twelve miles. It derives its name from the great abundance of an esculent root called wappatoo; a name which the Indians give the potato. This root is oblong, about one inch long and half an inch thick, resembling the lower end of a small parsnip. The Indians use it for food; and I have seen flocks of swans, which abound in these parts, dig it up with their bills, as it grows only a few inches below the surface. Its taste resembles that of the potato.

On this island, and on an elevated situation, near the point where the mouths of the Wallamette branch off, Captain Wyeth, of Boston, founded a settlement, when he commenced his fishing and fur trading projects; but which has since been abandoned, with the abandonment of his projects. The vegetation is generally good; but in the central parts there are marshes, in which the water rises and falls with the tide, and overflows the land. It is covered, in most parts, with different kinds of timber, but principally oak and pine. A few hogs placed on it a few years ago by the Company have increased to large herds, which subsist on the wappatoo, acorns, &c., and are become a source of profit, by supplying pork for the home consumption, and for exportation. On the island the Company have also established a large dairy farm.

The upper, or eastern mouth of the Wallamette is about half the breadth of the Columbia; the river itself, which flows nearly due north, is navigable to the distance of twenty-five miles for large vessels, and is studded with numerous islands, on which the timber is chiefly oak, very little pine (if any) growing there. The further navigation of the river is obstructed by rapids, and is completely barred by cataracts, or falls, about a mile above the rapids. The tide ascends as far as these rapids, which can be passed only by canoes. The Cow country, on the western banks, is generally high land, covered with wood, principally pine, rising from the water side. The land on the eastern side is undulating, and admirably calculated for cultivation. The river receives many tributaries; but one of the most considerable is one which flows from the east, and rushes into the Wallamette with such force, just below the rapids, as to create a heavy and dangerous swell. As far as the rapids the breadth of the river is about five hundred yards. The falls consist of three successive cascades, in which the water is precipitated through deep gullies worn into ledges of black rock, running in an irregular diagonal across the bed of the river. The noise of the water is almost deafening, resembling the roar of the loudest thunder; and the appearance of the spray, acted on by the sun's rays, is almost dazzling. The eastern shore, for some distance below the falls, is a perpendicular cliff, thirty feet high. On the top of this cliff there is a sort of small plain; and as the valley of the Wallamette is the most fertile district in all Columbia, and best calculated for the production of corn (since the country round about abounds in excellent timber of different kinds) and as the falls can be approached from above, as well as from below, by sloops, schooners, steamers, &c., this small plot of level ground on the precipitous bank of the river at the lowest cascade is admirably calculated as a site for flour and saw mills. When I left the country the Company, seeing all these advantages, were forming a raceway at the falls; and were drawing timber to the ground, with a view to erect some such works there. Formerly it was necessary to unload at the commencement of the falls, and convey canoes, luggage, and all, over land to the other end, till there was deep and smooth water found again.

It is a curious sight to observe the salmon ascending those waterfalls. They seem to measure the height and distance, and their own strength accurately. They appear to put their tails in their mouths; and having drawn the body to the proper curve, and produced the necessary tension and poise, they let go their hold and spring upward, (outside the descending sheet of water,) like an arrow shot from a bow, and reach the next basin into which the water is precipitated. Having there, as it were, taken breath, and recruited their strength after such an effort, they renew the attempt, over the successive cataracts, until they reach the smooth river above. They generally succeed; some, however, fail, and get sadly battered against the rocks.

A short distance above the falls, the mountains immediately rise from the water's edge, and are clothed with forests of the largest timber, to the distance of about fifteen miles along the river; and after that the country opens on both sides into a rich level, or undulating ground, spreading to a great extent. This section of the river is navigable nearly for as large vessels as can navigate the section below the falls.

It is in this fertile district, near the banks of the river, at the distance of about fifty miles from its entrance into the Columbia, that the Wallamette settlement has been established.

The Americans make a great boast of this settlement as an American establishment; and speak of it in their public papers and speeches, as if it were a settlement exclusively American, and founded by Americans, capable of being made the nucleus of a great community—that it is a most thriving colony—that it continues the right of possession to the government of the States—that it owes no favour to, and is independent of, the Hudson's Bay Company—that there it stands, and will stand, a memorial of American right—that it is the duty of the American government to protect it; while it holds out every incentive to industrious and enterprising citizens to join it. All this, and much more, has been said and written by gasconading traders on the passions and weakness of the populace, about this vaunted establishment: and has been believed. It is not very surprising that any extravagant story, which flattered the vanity, or excited the hopes or the cupidity of such a people as the Americans, should gain credence in the States; especially if it be seasoned with bitterness against the "Britishers." Much of this misrepresentation and exaggerating nonsense has been believed too in England; simply because the public could not imagine that statements so pertinaciously reiterated could be without, at least, some foundation; and because no attempts were made by those acquainted with the real state of the case to disabuse the British public of their misconception, on this, and other points of importance; such as the right of possession.

The Hudson's Bay Company, who had the best means of refuting the statements of the United States' writers, evidently despised and disregarded those statements. They were content, not only with the possession of the country, as the *chief partners*, and with the almost exclusive enjoyment of its trade; but rested on the consciousness of their just, moral, and judicious conduct as traders, and occupiers under their right of imperial tenure: and they fairly and naturally concluded that it would tend to throw a doubt on the justice of their claim, if they were to enter into a controversy about it. Their claim they considered to be undeniably just; and its vindication to be the duty of the legislature alone.

Now the plain history of the origin and progress of this settlement is simply this.

About seventeen or eighteen years ago, when the settlement at Vancouver, as the western head-quarters of the Company, acquired a distinguished and very prominent position, and became the rallying-point for all the servants of the Company far and near; when the surrounding country became well explored; when, from the long and undisputed possession of it by the Company, it began to be considered by the Company's servants as British land—British, too, as to its climate, and the capabilities of the soil—some of the Company's servants, when they had determined to enjoy the tranquillity of independent retirement after their long and arduous services, fixed on the banks of the Wallamette as their last place of residence; rather than return to Canada, or Scotland, or England, from which they were weaned by long absence. The Company gave every encouragement for the formation of a settlement, giving them stock, &c., to start with.

By and by, some of the Company's officers (I may especially mention one—Mr. M'Kay, the well-known and meritorious director of the Rocky Mountain trapping parties) thought this commencement afforded a fair opportunity of becoming settlers, cumulatively with the retention of their connexion with the Company, and they opened farms there. The speculation went on thrivingly: and the opinion spread abroad, even to the United States, through means of the American free-trappers, that a rising colony would be soon established in that locality; and that the success of this, under such powerful auspices as those of the Company, would gradually lead to the colonisation of the whole lower region, where it was capable of colonisation. This impression the Company's chief officers did not attempt to remove. They, on the contrary, rather wished to afford every encouragement and facility for the progress of improvement and civilization.

The Americans, who had already made many attempts to effect a lodgment in the country, but on every occasion *failed*, either from their want of skill, or of capital, or of integrity in their dealings with the natives—whether they attempted fur trading companies or fishing companies—having now seen that a fair opportunity of securing a possession was opened to them under the Company's shelter, bethought them of despatching missionaries, with the ostensibly benevolent and Christian view of giving religious culture to the rude, and ill-educated servants of the Company, and the denizens of this growing little community.

A few missionaries did arrive; and they, as was becoming their professed purpose, received every encouragement and favour from the governor of Fort Vancouver—Dr. M'Loughlin; and, as became their true purpose, commenced resident farmers—teaching, it is true, the natives the great elements of Christianity, and forms of prayer—but using their gratuitous labour for the cultivation of their fields. These missionaries did not "hide their lamp under a bushel," but, on the contrary, "proclaimed their light before all men," and sent to the States flattering accounts of their success. The consequence was, that some adventurers, with a little property, were induced to brave the perils of the long and formidable journey (leaving millions of more fertile acres at home, requiring less capital and labour for cultivation) to the Oregon. Some of these settlers came in their real character of farmers, but they were very few. Others came in the guise of missionaries—such missionaries as their predecessors—men who give a little preaching as an equivalent for much bodily labour performed by the native converts. Some of these have located themselves in other districts: and hence there are, by American writers, given the most pompous accounts—accounts, to those who are acquainted with the real facts, sometimes laughable, and sometimes calculated to excite indignation and disgust—of American settlements.

While I was stationed at Vancouver, and in the detached forts, and in the trading ships, the excessively benevolent encouragement granted by the governor to the new importation of American residents, under the designation of missionary-settlers, used to be freely discussed. There were two parties—the patriot, and the *liberal*. The arguments, *pro and con*, may be summed up thus: the British, or patriots, maintained that the governor was too chivalrously generous—that his generosity was thrown away, and would be badly requited—that he was nurturing a race of men who would by-and-by rise from their meek and humble position as the grateful acknowledgers of his kindness, into the bold attitude of questioners of his own authority, and the British right to Vancouver itself. This party grounded their arguments on an appeal to the conduct and character of the Americans whom they had seen—especially the free-trappers, and the remnants of the American companies which still dodged about in the country. They did too take into account the missionaries, who were then tried, and who, of course, did every thing in their power to conciliate, at their first appearance on such a new stage, the good opinion of those whose applause or condemnation could retain, or expel them from the scene of their labours, and prospects. This party had a very lively feeling for the improvement of the Indians in all the arts of civilization, and thought that if any attempts were made for the conversion of the natives to Christianity, and to their adoption of more humanized institutions (which they limited to British institutions), a solid and permanent foundation should be laid—the Indians should not be instructed by halves—a thoroughly lasting system should be adopted towards them; which would make them not merely professed, but practical Christians. Something more than making them the observers of forms, and the repeaters of prayers, was requisite, especially as most of the tribes already believed in many of the great cardinal points of Christianity—such as the existence of a good and evil Spirit—the creation of the world by the Good Spirit—the immortality of the soul—a future state of rewards and punishments. They also maintained that the missionaries should be missionaries in reality—men looking to the successful termination of their labours as their principal reward—men above the imputation or suspicion of being guided by self-interest, in their exertions—men who would not squat, as permanent and fixed husbandmen, and occasional traffickers in skins of animals, among the natives, using them as farm-labourers; but that they should be *bona fide* pastors of the Christian church—going about in the true spirit of primitive Christianity—instructing the people in the cardinal doctrines of our religion, and in the arts of civilised life. Furthermore, they used to maintain, that, if missionaries at all were to be introduced, or sanctioned in the country, this useful class of men—a class calculated to exercise such vital influence over the character and condition of the natives—should come within the direct control of the dominant power, *i. e.*, the British power, and should be the countrymen of those who absolutely occupied Oregon. Besides, they used occasionally to launch out against the character and institutions of the Americans generally, saying that, while they proclaimed liberty, they practised slavery, in some of its most odious forms, not as individuals merely, but that whole States adopted and defended the practice—that it was then a fraud and a mockery for Americans to profess any anxiety for the amelioration of the Indians, since at home they enslaved and hunted them down, keeping them in irredeemable bondage in the southern states, and driving those who still retained their freedom, in the north, and northwest, to the hills and deserts east of the Rocky Mountains. They also used to urge the *strong facts* of the repeated *failures* of the Americans to secure any extensive possession in the country, and of the general repugnance of the natives to them—repugnance caused by the experience which the natives had of their habits and principles—men who had no scruple about the means of making money, and who would, at the caprice of the moment, hang up an obnoxious individual, without judge or jury, by their *Lynch*, or mob law.

The other party, which was called the *philosophical* and the *liberal* party, did not contravene these general heads of argument. They admitted that the Americans, not only as individuals, but in communities of whole States, were not exempt from the charge of fraudulency and tyranny; inasmuch as the Southern States are slaveholders, and some of the wealthiest States openly refuse to pay their debts, though no people treat their own debtor-prisoners more cruelly;—that the half-apostolical, and half-agricultural character of the missionaries, was not that best adapted to the purpose and spirit of men going abroad to enlighten the heathen;—that the Americans failed to secure a permanent footing as traders in the country, from the dishonesty of their dealings, and their habit of domineering over the Indians, and corrupting them. But still they asserted that the Americans ought not to be excluded, inasmuch as they possessed some claims to the right of occupancy—claims, though feeble, still existing—and, until these were quashed or confirmed, it would be unjust, and impolitic, to exclude them from all possession. The Americans were, it was true, they admitted, holders of slaves at home, and were every day driving the Indians from their native lands; and, though hypocrites, as to professions of freedom, on that account, yet they could not enslave the Indians of Oregon, or drive them further off, when there was British power to check them.

Though the missionaries were not of the best class, yet they were better than none at all; especially when England so grossly neglected the natives. Dr. M'Loughlin may have acted indiscreetly, but he acted justly, in sanctioning these emigrants. He could not lay an interdict on their arrival; and even should they turn out as bad as the rest of the motley groups that came from the States, the British residents could not be disappointed. But, above all, good would grow out of evil in the end; for the Americans, by their intercourse with the British, would become more humanized, tolerant, and honest. Hence, they said, it was philosophical and liberal to encourage the American missionary squatters. And as to the American Lynch law, and other usages which were repugnant to justice and humanity, they were rather exceptions to the American code, than examples of American principles of legislation, which, in commercial and civil matters, was, generally speaking, just and humane; and from which even British legislation derived some useful hints.

These debates, which embraced various other points, too numerous to detail, would sometimes run high; and show a great deal of acuteness and general knowledge,—more than would be expected from men who had spent most of their time in the wilderness, and in communion with savages. The Canadians and halfbreeds generally sided with the British, or patriot party, and turned the scale. But I must confess, that though, on the whole range of dispute, the patriot party were the victors, yet, on one point, their antagonists had a clear advantage—the neglect of the conversion and civilization of the natives on the part of the home-government and of the British and Foreign Missionary Society. But this subject is more fully treated in another place.

The residents of this settlement of Wallamette are a mixed and motley group—retired servants of the Company—American missionary-farmers—some few American farmers, not missionaries; and free trappers, who preferred an easy location on this district, to the exciting and desperate perils of solitary wanderings amid the hills and deserts, and to occasional residence among the savages: several of these latter have squatted there with their Indian wives and children. The residences show different degrees of comfort, according to the property, the intelligence, and industry of the occupiers; from the rude log-structure, of fifteen or twenty feet square, with the mud-chimney—a wooden bench in place of chairs—a bedstead covered with flag-mats—a few pots, and other trifling articles, to the large, tolerably well-built, and equipped farm-house; in which the owners enjoy, in rude plenty, the produce of tolerably well-tilled, and well-stocked farms. These spots of cultivated land, of course, vary in extent and quality of culture according to the skill and resources of the owners. Some farms consist of not more than thirty acres; some consist of one hundred. The best appointed farms are those of the Company's servants. Mr. M'Kay, who has farmed under the Company's sanction, has lately erected a grist-mill, the expense of which is reported to be not less than £2000. These dwellings do not, properly speaking, constitute a village, but are scattered over a surface of several miles: though some few are clustered together. Most of the missionaries are Episcopalian Methodists. But half the civilized population, if not more, are Roman Catholics, who have their own priest and their own chapel.

The colony has all the appurtenances of a settlement—schoolhouses—chapels—an hospital—a meeting-house—granaries, &c. But though there is a considerable extent of land under cultivation, yet the whole is not perhaps more extensive than the Company's single farm at Vancouver; and in point of management, and approximation to true farming (according to English principles and notions), cannot be even remotely compared to it.

Lieutenant Wilkes, who conducted the Exploring Expedition appointed by the American government, visited this settlement; and in his report, lately published by authority, says,—"About *sixty* families are settled there, the industrious of whom appear to be thriving. They are composed of American missionaries, trappers, and Canadians, who were formerly servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. All of them appeared to be doing well; but I was, on the whole, disappointed from the *reports which had been made to me*, not to find the settlement in a greater state of forwardness, considering the advantages which the missionaries have had."

Now this account of the settlement deserves to be noticed. He says that the number of families settled there was sixty—not more. Of these, many were British subjects; so that the number of subjects of the United States was inconsiderable. The American missionaries were merely speculating small farmers. *All* were not thriving; but only the industrious portion. This, together with his mention of disappointment, and of the *reports* made to him, clearly shows that there were circulated in the States, exaggerated accounts of the prosperity and importance of the colony; and false inducements held out to citizens, to emigrate thither; and to the Federal government, to sustain its rights even at the risk of a quarrel with Great Britain, in defence of this fancied American colony—rights which were not, and are not, invaded; and are not meant to be invaded by the Company. This admission, too, which is involved in his account, is the more worthy of notice, considering the disposition which this gentleman shows, to represent to his government the Oregon territory as a prize, even in an agricultural point of view, worth contending for; as appears from the extravagance of his general picture, in his summing up. He says:—

"To conclude; few portions of the globe, in my opinion, are so rich in *soil*, so diversified in surface, or so capable of being rendered the happy home of an industrious and civilized community. For beauty of scenery, and *salubrity of climate*, it cannot be surpassed. It is peculiarly adapted for an *agricultural* and pastoral people: and no portion of the world, beyond the tropics, can be found that will yield so readily, with moderate labour, to the wants of man."

All this he asserts, although it appears from his whole previous statement, that from the nature of the soil and climate, he considered at least one half of the territory unfit for agriculture. With respect to the entire of the eastern section, he says, "The temperature during the day, differing from 50° to 60°, renders it *unfit for agriculture;* and there are but few places in its northern parts, where the climate would not effectually put a stop to its *ever becoming settled.* In each day, according to the best accounts, all the changes are experienced, which are incident to spring, summer, autumn, and winter. There are places where small farms might be located, but they are *few* in number."

Mr. Farnham, the latest American writer, though an undisguised partisan—a rampant anti-Britisher—and anxious to place the capabilities and value of the country in the most favourable view before his fellow-citizens, cannot avoid dissenting from Mr. Wilkes's concluding remarks. He says, "It will be seen on reference to them, that the agricultural capabilities of Oregon are placed above those of any part of the world, beyond the tropics. This is a most *surprising conclusion*—at war with his own account of the several sections which he visited; and denied by every intelligent man living in the country. What! Oregon in this respect equal to California, or the Valley of the Mississippi!"

I beg to quote from Mr. Farnham, who visited this settlement, the following passage. Alluding to the missionaries, he says, "their object in settling in Oregon, I understood to be twofold—the one, and principal, to civilise and Christianise the Indians—the other, and not less important, the establishment of *religious and literary institutions, for the benefit of the white emigrants.* Their plan of operation on the Indians, is to learn their various languages, for the purpose of *itinerant* preaching, and of teaching the young the English language. The scholars are also instructed in agriculture, the regulations of a well-established household, reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography."

Then it appears, these missionaries were encouraged to settle in the country, in order that they may open the way, and hold out inducements, for an influx of emigrants from the States. No doubt their published prospectus of benefits to come is highly imposing; and their promised zeal and efficiency are very great, until they come to be tested: but the following passage brings down their disinterestedness, as disseminators of religion, and their prosperity as an agricultural community, to a low standard.

"They have many *hundred* acres of land under the plough; and cultivated chiefly by the *native pupils*. They have more than a hundred head of horned cattle; thirty or forty horses; and many swine. They have granaries filled with wheat, oats, barley, and peas; and cellars well stored with vegetables."

This shows, that from their using the *native pupils* as labourers, they did not mean to dispense their blessings without receiving a little consideration—that they are not altogether spiritual in their motives, and mode of life: and their many *hundred* acres of land under the plough; their maximum stock of horned cattle; and thirty or forty horses, are no great signs of their rising greatness; especially when it is considered that they have been now located for many years in the country; and had, as Mr. Wilkes—the organ of the federal government—assures us, "many advantages"—which means, that they received all American support, especially from the funds of the missionary society of Boston, in order to effect American purposes.

It is well worth while to quote here Mr. Wilkes. Under the general head of "*Missionaries*" (and he indeed weighs in the balance the entire class—not those of the Wallamette settlement alone, but those too scattered about in other localities), he says, "*Little* has as yet been effected by them in *Christianizing* the natives. They are principally engaged in the cultivation of the mission farms, and in the care of their own stock; in order to obtain flocks and herds for themselves. As far as my observation went, in the parts of the country where the missionaries reside, there are few Indians to engage their attention; and they seemed more occupied with the settlement of the country, and in agricultural pursuits, than in missionary labours."

Every word of this is undeniably true: and not the least remarkable and important part of the statement is the *accident* (query, fortuitous?) of their having selected localities for residence, where they had no spiritual flocks to tend.

But though they have not as yet thriven as well as Mr. Wilkes expected, yet Mr. Farnham, in the following paragraph, threatens the execution of great projects; and holds out the hope that they will, by and by, erect a community, with all the concomitant institutions, worthy of the mother republic. It is true, the paragraph, from its boast and magniloquence, will appear, to sober Englishmen, ridiculous; but it is quite characteristic; and is well calculated to foster the pleasing and voluntary delusion of American vanity—the purpose for which it was designed.

"A site had been already selected for an *academical* building. A *court of Justice* had been *organised* by the popular voice. A *military corps* was about to be formed for the protection of settlers—and *other* measures were in progress: at once showing that the American, with his characteristic energy and enterprise; and the philanthropist, with his holy aspirations for the improvement of the human condition—had crossed the snowy barrier of the mountain; to mingle with the dashing waves of the Pacific seas, the sweet music of a busy and virtuous civilisation" ! ! !

He then gives a sketch of the plucky patriotism of the settlers:—

"During my stay here, several American citizens called on me, to talk of their father-land; and inquire as to the probability that its laws would be extended over them. The constantly-repeated inquiries were, 'why are we left without protection in this part of our country's dominion?—why are *foreigners* to *domineer* over American citizens—drive their traders from the country—and make us as dependent on them for the clothes we wear, as their own apprenticed *slaves?*' I could return no answer to these questions, exculpatory of this national delinquency; and therefore advised them to embody their grievances in a petition to Congress. They had a meeting for that purpose: and afterwards put into my hand a petition, signed by *sixty-seven* citizens of the United States, and *persons desirous of becoming such*—the substance of which was a description of the country—their unprotected situation—and, in conclusion, a prayer that the Federal government would extend over them the protection and institutions of the republic. Five or six of the settlers had not an opportunity to sign the paper. The Catholic priest refused to do it."

Setting aside the silly abusiveness, and anti-British *animus* evinced in the whole paragraph, and especially in the application of the epithet *slaves* to the apprentices and agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, the reader cannot fail to observe the important fact, that, notwithstanding all the zeal of the settlers and of Mr. Farnham, and all the efforts to make a demonstration, the petitioners to Congress were not more than sixty-seven—educated and uneducated—civilized, half-breeds, and wild trappers, with their Indian wives. Even all these were not citizens, but embraced "persons desirous of becoming such." How many the latter class consisted of he does not say. If the number was at all important he would not fail to mention it. But suppose these were all Americans; add to them the five or six settlers who had no opportunity of signing this petition, and who, it is fair to presume, were Americans, yet the aggregate could not exceed eighty souls. Now as this petition was evidently a *get up* affair (for this gentleman went to the settlement with American colours flying—there were harbingers to herald his arrival, as a great American writer and champion, visiting them in order to inspect their condition, and improve it), it is to be regretted that he did not give us an assurance whether the sixty-seven names were the *bona fide* names of persons come to the age of discretion; no matter whether the petitioners could write their own names or not. But let it be conceded, that every one of the sixty-seven was a full grown man, of mature understanding, wishing to retain the privileges of citizenship, and receive the exclusive protection of the Federal government; yet the whole matter is a clear admission of the insignificance of the settlement (so far as its Americanism is concerned), and of the fallacious representations industriously propagated about it, with the view of giving factitious importance to American rights and American possession. He says the Catholic priest refused to sign the petition. No doubt he did; and prudently too; for he knew well, that he was sufficiently free and secure already; and that it would not be clearsightedness to surrender the steady light and certainty of British freedom and protection, for the will-o'-the-wisp of expected American licentiousness.

Now Mr. Wilkes gives a *quietus* to all these lamentations about the absence of republican laws and federal protection, in these plain terms: "When there, I made particular inquiries whether *laws* were *necessary* for their protection: and I feel assured that they require none at present, besides the moral code which it is their own duty to inculcate." He next adds, "The Catholic portion of the settlement are kept under good control by their priest." This little paragraph is doubly significant, as showing the reason why the priest did not consider that his flock required these American laws and institutions, and showing the marked contrast between the priest, who effected much for his congregation, and the Methodist missionaries, who effected but little.

But Mr. Farnham is somewhat inconsistent with himself, as men generally are who become partisans—take a distorted view of things—and labour only to carry a point, and bespatter their adversaries. After his elaborate eulogy of the noble objects and successful labours of the missionaries, in improving the moral condition of the natives; and after holding forth glowing prospects of the rising greatness of the settlement,—in as much as they had already selected a site for an academical building—organized a court of justice—were about to form a military corps, for the protection of the settlers; and after his talking so poetically about the American "enterprise and philanthropist mingling the dashing waves of the Pacific seas, with the sweet music of busy and virtuous civilization;" after all this, he descends rather awkwardly and suddenly from his high position, and, in plain terms, says:

"The civil condition of the territory being such as virtually to *prohibit the emigration*, to any extent, of *useful and desirable citizens*, they have nothing to anticipate from any considerable increase of their numbers, nor any amelioration of their state to look for, from the accession of female society. In the desperation incident to their lonely lot, they take wives from the Indian tribes around them."

Then if there is likely to be no extensive emigration of *useful and desirable* citizens, there cannot be much of the sweet music of a *busy and virtuous civilisation*, and no great need of *academical buildings*, and a *military corps* for the protection of settlers; though there may be for a *court of justice*, as the settlers, it would appear, from the absence of useful and desirable citizens, must be a class among whom such an establishment would be desirable, The present settlers are useful and desirable citizens, or they are not. If they are, why may there not be an accession to their numbers from the States? If they are not, what is the use of the boasted missionaries? Why do not these men labour to render them useful and moral?

He further says, "The reader will find it difficult to learn any sufficient reasons for their being left without the *institutions* of *civilized* society!" Now there are the institutions of British society, and laws in full force, in the country; and of which they have the benefit and protection. But as we were before told that the officers and other employees of the Hudson's Bay Company were "apprenticed slaves," so now it is not surprising that *British* institutions should be *denied* to be those of *civilized* society.

But the crowning hardship of the American citizens in Oregon, it seems, is that they must pay their debts incurred to the British, and are liable to punishment for the commission of crimes.

He says, "Their condition is truly deplorable. They are liable to be arrested for debt or crime, and conveyed to the jails of Canada. For in that case the business of British subjects is interfered with, who, by way of retaliation, will withhold the supplies of clothing, household goods, &c., which the settlers have no other means of obtaining." This certainly is a cool mode of claiming a license for the free citizens to cheat, and injure their neighbours with impunity. So forsooth it is but a mere *interference* with the business of British subjects to rob them; and it is a great hardship if the British withhold supplies from the Americans when they refuse to pay them. Had any Englishman said, or written, that this was the opinion of the Americans in Oregon, or out of it, he would be denounced as a prejudiced misrepresenter. But here the opinion is broadly avowed, by the organ of the democratic and dominant party in the United States.

It is necessary to mention two rivers to the south of the Wallamette, which flow through the same fertile and picturesque section of the country as the Wallamette does (that section which is encircled by the Columbia ridge of hills on the north—by the ridge which runs along the shores of the Pacific on the west—by the towering Klamet range on the south—and by the southern links of the President's range on the east.) These rivers are the Umqua and Klamet.

The Umqua runs into the Pacific in nearly a westerly direction, from its source in the President's range; and is lined for about a hundred miles by precipitous and rocky banks, covered with woods. It is nearly a mile wide at its mouth, and about three fathoms deep. The tide runs up about thirty miles; and is then checked by rapids and cataracts, which are to be found, even when the lower cataracts are passed, up the course of the river to its mountain source. Its entire length is about one hundred and seventy miles.

Perhaps, on the face of the earth, there are not larger specimens of the pine tree than can be found here. Some of these trees are two hundred and fifty feet high, and fifty feet in girth. The seed vessels, which are oval, are often more than a foot long, and the seeds are as large as a castor bean. I have seen some of these seeds brought to the fort that, from my observation of the many pretty things exhibited in the British Museum as curiosities, would, if exhibited there, be considered absolute *wonders*. I ought to say, that the largest pine trees do not yield the hardest, closest, and most valuable wood for use. Cedar trees are there often twenty-six feet in girth, and high in proportion; and the gardens attached to the Company's fort produce turnips, often five pounds in weight each. Indeed, the natural capabilities of the soil are surprising.

The Klamet, further south, runs nearly due west from the President's range into the Pacific, about fifty miles south of the Umqua, after a course of about one hundred and fifty miles. This is the most southerly river of any note in the whole region, and the one that may be called the natural inland water-boundary, on the southwest, between Oregon and California.

Two peculiarities of the country around and near its banks, deserve notice. *First*, the face of the country is less undulating, and the country itself seems to rise higher in its agricultural and pastoral capabilities; and secondly, the enormous pine and cedar trees gradually disappear, and groves of short myrtle, which diffuse a most delicious fragrance, line the banks, and beautifully dot the country.

The Company have a settlement near the mouth of the Umqua, and have there commenced farming establishments, which promise (considering the great fecundity of the soil, and the genial and salubrious character of the climate,) if pushed on with the usual vigour and judgment exhibited in other establishments, farther to the north, where soil and climate have been comparatively unfavourable, to succeed amazingly.

As Mr. Farnham loses no opportunity of (to use an American phrase) *making a slap at the Britishers* in general, and the Hudson's Bay Company in particular—although he acknowledges the kind and hospitable entertainment which he received at Fort Vancouver,—he treats his readers to the following accusation. Speaking of a Captain Young, an American, who, after failing in many trading speculations in the west of the continent, settled as a small farmer in Wallamette district, and whom he designates as the "*excellent* old captain," he says, "He related to me many incidents of his hardships, among which the most surprising was that the Hudson's Bay Company refused to sell him a shred of clothing, and as there were no *other* traders in the country he was compelled, *during their pleasure*, to wear skins. A *false* report that he had been guilty of some dishonourable acts in California was the *alleged* cause for this treatment. But *perhaps* a *better* reason *would be* that Mr. Young occasionally purchased beaver skins in the American territory." To assert a false fact is bad enough, but to follow it up by gratuitously hazarding a false opinion in support of it, is most reprehensible and unjustifiable. The Company, so long as this man conducted himself properly as a free trader, gave him every assistance. Of his alleged dishonourable conduct in California, and other places (though reports very much to his discredit were confidently circulated about him, and by his own countrymen, who had no inducement to accuse him falsely), the Company took no cognizance. They judged of him as they had experience of him. The Company interdicted, all through their range of operations in the Oregon, the use of spirituous liquors, as an article of trade among the natives, from a knowledge of its injurious influence upon them, or as an article of general use and luxury among their servants. Young, thinking a trade in spirits would be a good speculation, set up a distillery, and began to induce, not alone the natives, but the servants of the Company, to deal with him. When the Company expressed their disapproval of this and *other* proceedings, he commenced an *agitating* course among the settlers, and defied the Company. The Company then quietly left him to his own resources. As to the insinuation which Mr. Farnham makes that the gravemen of his offence was his trading in American territory, as if Oregon was exclusively such, the reader can easily draw his own inference:—it was intended to work a purpose in the States.

CHAPTER XIII.

General outline of the Oregon Territory.

THE natural limits of this extensive and important region, are strictly defined by nature. On the west, it is bounded, along its whole length, by the Pacific Ocean, and is indented by numerous bays and inlets—on the south, by the fertile country of California, and the Klamet range of hills, which are an offshoot from the Rocky Mountains, and run in a parallel of 42°—on the whole of the east line, by the main ridge of the towering Rocky Mountains—and on the north, as the boundary between it and the Russian territories, by many spurs from the Rocky Mountains, and by a chain of lakes and rivers.

The extent of the whole region in its widest sense, is about four times the area of Great Britain. It is remarkable, that all the rivers which flow through this territory, take their rise and are emptied within these limits; so that it may be said, that it scarcely has any natural communication with any other country. It extends from latitude 42° to that of 54° north. For beauty of scenery, salubrity of climate along the Pacific, and general adaptation for commerce, it can scarcely be surpassed by any country in the world. There are, too, in many places, great fertility of soil, and agricultural capabilities.

The natural character of the whole country, is a succession of mountain ridges, and valleys, and plains; and though there are many fertile districts within it, especially towards the ocean, yet it may be safely averred, that as a *whole*, it is not favourable for agricultural cultivation.

It is, in a word, chiefly valuable for trade; and for the advantages of the Columbia, and other maritime stations, to the north; which secure for the possessors a command of the Northern Pacific, and an easy way to China. Of this the Americans are fully aware; and hence their extraordinary anxiety, and exertions to effect a lodgment there. Hence too their exaggerated claims—their misrepresentations—contemptible bluster; and impotent menaces.

Though their writers and speakers have been for years deceiving, not alone the British public, but even their own; by holding forth the country as a new paradise, in the remote wilderness of the west, to which the Americans alone had an undisputed right, while it was wrongfully invaded by the "grasping and oppressive Britishers;" and most criminally inciting the ignorant populace to raise a ferment throughout the whole confederation; in reference to the questioned—and indeed most *questionable*—claim of the Americans to the territory; and inciting their countrymen to encounter almost incalculable privations and hazards, in order to fix settlements in the country: yet the *knowing ones* of them must have been all along sensible that it is valuable mainly for trade.

As nature has given the country external boundaries, of mountain, sea, lake, and river: so it may be internally divided into three natural sections.

First. The western section; lying between the Pacific Ocean, and Cascade Mountains—sometimes called President's Range. This range runs parallel with the coast, the whole length of the territory, from north to south, rising in many places in high peaks, from twelve thousand to sixteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. Their distance from the coast varies from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty miles.

Second. The middle section, lying between the Cascade Mountains on the west, and the Blue Mountain range, on the east. The Blue Mountains are much broken and irregular in their course.

Third. The eastern section, which extends from the zigzag line of the Blue Mountains to the chain of the Rocky Mountains. Though each division or section may be said to be separated from another, there are numerous communications between them by the large rivers, valleys, and passes. Thus, while the country is divided into parts, yet these parts are bound and consolidated by one vast belt of external boundary.

Mountains.—The Cascade Range, as being that which bounds the western section of the country, and the most fertile and valuable section, is the most interesting and important range. Its northern termination may be taken from Mount Elias: it diverges thence eastward; and winds afterwards southward, to the Gulf of California; showing, along its course, numerous lofty peaks; and, *like most of the other mountains, strong signs of volcanic* action, at a remote period. The American writers and authors give many of these peaks the names of American presidents. Says Mr. Farnham, in his usual gasconading style, "All the *principal* peaks *should* bear the names of those distinguished men, whom the suffrages of *the people that own Oregon* (!) have from time to time called to administer their national government."

Hence we have, from north to south, on American authority, Mounts Tyler,—Harrison,—Van Buren,—Adams,—Washington,—Jefferson,—Madison,—Monroe,—Quincy Adams,—Jackson; names that are, for the most part, new to the *Britishers*.

But, however, as they designate certain distinct conical eminences, I adopt them for the present purpose.

Mount Tyler lies in latitude forty-nine, and about thirty miles from the eastern waters of Vancouver's Island. Mount Harrison, about thirty miles east of Paget's Sound. Mount Van Buren, on the isthmus between Paget's Sound and the Pacific. Mount Adams, about twenty-five miles north of the Cascades of the Columbia. Mount Washington, about twenty miles south of the Cascades. This is the loftiest peak of all, and is about sixteen thousand feet high. Mount Jackson is the most southern peak of the range, lying in latitude forty-one, beyond the southern boundary of the Oregon.

These heights present a general sameness of appearance and character. They are covered with snow, and their sides are in general bare, rocky, and precipitous. This chain of mountains runs almost parallel with the Rocky Mountains; and, at an average, is about four hundred miles distant from them; so that the main breadth of the country, from the Rocky Mountains to the ocean, is, on a loose calculation, about five hundred miles. The *hills* intervening between these towering conical *mountain peaks* are covered, from bottom to top, with forests of enormous trees—consisting of pine, fir, cedar, &c. Many of these present a bare shaft of two hundred feet *high, before a limb shoots off*; and near the base have a circumference of from six to eight fathoms. On the north side of the Columbia, near the Cascades, there runs westward a spur, varying from one thousand to fifteen hundred feet high above the river, from this great chain, covered with the huge trees indigenous to the country, as far as Cape Disappointment. This spur commences near Mount Adams. On the south side of the river a smaller spur, commencing at the Cascades, runs, from near Mount Washington, westward as far as Fort George; so that the Columbia, from the Cascades almost to its mouth, runs through a deep valley, of unequal breadth, walled in by high mountains. These two parallel spurs decline in altitude westward. Again, there is another range of mountains, running along the brink of the Pacific coast from Upper California, northward as far as the Straits of Fuca. This range is, for the most part, a bare and barren ridge of dark rocks. But the eastern sides of the southern portion are covered with heavy timber, such as pine, fir, spruce, &c.

That portion of the Oregon which is bounded on the north by the Columbia—by the President's Range on the east—by the Californian boundary on the south—and by the Pacific on the west, is by far the most fertile, and beautiful, and genial; and, in truth, not only comparatively with the other parts of the region is it so, but it is so abstractedly. Though undulating and broken in its surface, it may be designated as a vast rich plain, embedded within a circle of mountains: for on the west it is guarded by the Pacific ridge of mountains—on the south by the Klamet Range of the towering, snow-capped mountains, on the east by the rocks of the President's Range—and on the north by the Columbian hills. This vast valley possesses every facility for pasturage, and every capability for cultivation. The land is in general open—delightfully interspersed with clumps and groves of trees—well stocked with deer, elk, and all sorts of game; and is studded with small lakes, and rivers, which yield, in innumerable quantities, all sorts of fish.

The principal rivers are the Wallamette, the Umqua, and Klamet; which, with the productiveness of the soil, have been already noticed.

Rivers.—The principal river is the Columbia, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, in latitude 50° north, and longitude 116° west; and during its course to the ocean, receives a great number of large tributary streams. After receiving Canoe River, and flowing in a southwesterly direction, and expanding into a line of lakes; it receives at Fort Colville, the River Colville, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, and takes a northwesterly direction. At Colville, it is two thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. To the south of this, it winds to the westward, receiving the Spokan River from the east. Thence it pursues a westerly course for about sixty miles; and at its bend to the south, it is joined by the Okanagan—a river that has its source in a line of lakes, affording boat-navigation for a considerable extent northward. Thence it passes to the southward, until it reaches

Wallawalla, in the latitude of 45°; receiving, among other streams, its great southeastern branch, the Snake River, called also the Saptin or Lewis River, which has its source in the Rocky Mountains. Though this latter river flows a distance of five hundred miles, and brings a vast accession of water to the Columbia, yet, from its numerous shallows, rapids, and eddies, it is not navigable for any continued extent. At Wallawalla, the Columbia is one thousand two hundred and eighty-six feet above the level of the sea, and about three thousand five hundred feet wide. It thence takes its last turn, to the westward, pursuing its rapid course for eighty miles, until it reaches the range of the Cascade Mountains. Through these it flows in a series of falls and rapids, that form insurmountable barriers to the passage of boats during the floods. However, these difficulties are overcome by portages. From thence there is a still-water navigation, for forty miles; when its course is again obstructed by rapids. Thence to the ocean—one hundred and twenty miles—it is navigable for vessels of twelve feet draught of water, at the lowest state of the river. In this part, it receives the Wallamette from the south, and the Cowlitse from the north. The former is navigable for small vessels, for twenty miles, to the mouth of the Klackamus; the latter is navigable only for canoes and barges.

The next river in importance is Frazer's River. It takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains, near the source of Canoe River, taking a northwest course of eighty miles. It then turns to the southward, receiving Stuart's River, which rises in a chain of lakes in the northern boundary of the territory. It then pursues a southerly course; and after receiving many tributaries, breaks through the Cascade range of hills, in a series of falls and rapids; and after a westerly course of seventy miles, empties itself into the Gulf of Georgia, in latitude 49° 7′ north. This latter portion is navigable for vessels that can pass its bar drawing ten feet of water. Its whole length is three hundred and fifty miles.

The principal rivers are rapid, and sunk much below the level of the country, with perpendicular banks, speaking generally. During the seasons of the rise, they frequently overflow their banks, in consequence of bars, and other obstructions, and submerge the adjacent low grounds. These rises are produced by the rains, or the melting of the snow on the upper mountains; and are sometimes very rapid. The rise in the Columbia takes place in May and June; and at Vancouver is about twenty feet. The rise in the Wallamette takes place in February.

There are numerous lakes scattered through the several sections. The country is all well watered; and there are but few places where an abundance of water cannot be obtained, either from lakes, rivers, or springs.

Climate.—The climate of the western division is mild throughout the year—neither the cold of winter, nor the heat of summer, predominating. The mean temperature is about 54°, Fahrenheit. The prevailing winds, in summer, are from the northward and westward; and in winter, from the west, south, and southeast. The winter lasts from about November till March, generally speaking. During that time, there are frequent falls of rain, but not heavy. Snow seldom lies longer than a week on the ground. There are frosts so early as September; but they are not severe, and do not continue long. The easterly winds are the coldest, as they come from across the mountains; but they are not frequent. Fruit trees blossom early in April, in the neighbourhood of Nasqually and Vancouver; and in the middle of May, peas are a foot high, and strawberries in full blossom: indeed, all fruits and vegetables are as early there as in England. The hills, though of great declivity, have a sward to their tops. Lieutenant Wilkes says, that out of one hundred and six days, seventy-six were fair, nineteen cloudy, and eleven rainy.

The middle section is subject to droughts. During summer, the atmosphere is drier and warmer, and the winter colder, than in the western section; its extremes of heat and cold being greater and more frequent. However, the air is pure and healthy; the atmosphere, in summer, being cooled by the breezes that blow from the Pacific.

The eastern section, which runs along the western base of the Rocky Mountains, and partly lies within their winding projections, is extremely variable in climate: all the changes incident to spring, summer, autumn, and winter, being sometimes experienced there in a single day.

Soil.—The soil of the *western* section varies from a deep black vegetable loam, to a light brown, loamy earth. The hills are generally basalt, stone, and slate. The surface is generally undulating, well watered, well wooded, and well adapted for agriculture and pasturage. The timber consists of pine, fir, spruce, oaks (white and red), ash, arbutus, cedar, arbor-vitæ, poplar, maple, willow, cherry, tew; with underwoods of hazel and roses. All kinds of grain, wheat, rye, barley, oats, and peas, can be procured there in abundance. Various fruits, such as pears, apples, &c., succeed there admirably; and the different vegetables produced in England yield there most abundant crops.

The middle section, which is about one thousand feet above the level of the western, is not so well wooded or fertile; yet in the southern parts of it, where the missionaries have established settlements, they have raised excellent crops, and reared large stocks of cattle. Notwithstanding the occasional cold, their cattle are not housed, nor is provender laid in for them in any quantity, the country being sufficiently supplied with fodder in the natural hay that is every where abundant in the prairies, which the cattle prefer.

The eastern section, from the coldness of the climate and comparative sterility of the soil, which is much impregnated with salts, is but little adapted for cultivation. No attempts at agriculture have been made there, except at Fort Hall. Here, by care, small grains and vegetables have been produced in sufficient quantity to supply the wants of the post; and the cattle, notwithstanding the severity of the climate, are found to thrive well, and not to require housing in winter.

At Nasqually, the Hudson's Bay Company have a farm which has been recently brought under cultivation. It yields fine crops of wheat, oats, potatoes, peas, &c. It is principally intended for a grazing and dairy farm. They have already one hundred milch cows, and make butter, &c., to supply the Russians. They have also brought another farm under cultivation at the Cowlitz River, about thirty miles from the Columbia. This farm, in 1841, produced seven thousand bushels of wheat. In this district several Canadians, and other British subjects, have established themselves;—work small farms of about fifty acres, and live very comfortably. The Company have also other farms, at the different posts in the interior, all of which are well stocked; and the produce of the several farms is made a lucrative article of trade (after supplying the wants of their servants) with the Russians. They have also introduced large herds and flocks from California; and thus they are gradually cultivating the country, and civilizing the natives.

Mr. Wilkes says, "In comparison with our own country, I would say, that the labour necessary in this territory to acquire wealth or subsistence is in the proportion of one to three; or in other words, a man must work throughout the year three times as much in the United States to gain the like competency. The care of stock, which occupies so much time with us, requires no attention there; and on the increase only a man might find support." He further says, "there will be also a demand for the timber of this country, at high prices, throughout the Pacific. The oak is well adapted for ship-timber, and abundance of ash, cedar, cypress, and arbor-vitæ, may be had for other purposes,—building, fuel, fencing, &c." He also adds, "no part of the world affords finer inland sounds, or a greater number of harbours, than are found within the Straits of Juan de Fuca, capable of receiving the largest class of vessels, and without a danger in them which is not visible. From the rise and fall of the tides (eighteen feet) every facility is afforded for the erection of works for a great maritime nation. The country also affords as many sites for water power as any other."

On the northern coast there are a number of islands, which belong to the territory. The largest are Vancouver Island, which is two hundred and sixty miles long, and fifty broad, containing fifteen thousand squares miles, and Queen Charlotte Island, which is one hundred and fifty miles long, and thirty broad, containing four thousand squares miles. The climate is mild and salubrious, and the soil well adapted to agriculture. They have also an abundance of fine fish in their waters. Coal, of a very good quality, is found there close by the surface; and they also contain numerous veins of valuable minerals.

All the rivers abound in salmon of the finest quality, which run twice a year, beginning in May and October, and appear inexhaustible. The Columbia produces the largest. The great fishery of this river is at the Dalles. The last one, on the northern branch of the Columbia, is near Colville, at the Kettle Falls; though salmon are found above this both in the river and its tributaries. In Frazer's River the salmon are very numerous. The bays and inlets abound with several kinds of salmon, sturgeon, cod, carp, sole, flounders, perch, herring, and eels; also with shell-fish—crabs, oysters, &c. Whales and sea-otter in numbers are found along the coast, and are frequently captured by the Indians in and at the mouth of the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

Game abounds in the western section, such as elk, deer, antelopes, bears, wolves, foxes, musk-rats, martens. And in the spring and fall the rivers are covered with geese, ducks, and other water-fowl. Towards the Rocky Mountains buffaloes are found in great numbers.

From the advantages this country possesses it bids fair to have an extensive commerce, on advantageous terms, with most parts of the Pacific. It is well calculated to produce the following staple commodities—furs, salted beef and pork, fish, grain, flour, wool, hides, tallow, timber, and coals; and, in return for these—sugars, coffee, and other tropical productions, may be obtained at the Sandwich Islands. Advantages that, in time, must become of immense extent.

CHAPTER XIV.

Astoria, or Fort George.

As the Americans have vaunted much about this settlement at the mouth of the Columbia, I shall give its history briefly.

Astoria, (now Fort George,) was founded in 1811 by Mr. Astor. This gentleman was a German, born near Heidelberg, on the banks of the Rhine. His parents were humble agriculturalists. He quitted his native village; and after residing some time in London, went, as an adventurer, to the United States. There he met a countryman of his, who had some knowledge of the fur trade; and by his recommendation he was induced to embark in this species of commercial enterprise. From small beginnings, he gradually rose to considerable importance as a fur trader; and became a bold and active speculator. It is unnecessary to detail the stages of his gradual progress and success; but in 1809 he obtained (after several ineffectual attempts had been made by the Americans, to secure a monopoly of this North-American trade) a charter from the legislature of the State of New York, incorporating a company, under the name of "The American Fur Company." He himself, however—according to his biographer, Washington Irving—in fact, constituted the company; for though he had a board of directors, they were merely nominal.

In 1811, he founded a settlement near the mouth of the river, which was called Astoria, his object being, according to Washington Irving, "to carry the fur trade across the Rocky Mountains, and *sweep the Pacific*." At this time he became naturalized, and was a *citizen*, from whose *patriotism*, energy, and skill, much was expected for the assertion of American rights, and the promotion of American commerce.

Mr. Astor's plans were certainly well conceived, for extending the trade inland by a line of stationary posts, and rambling parties, from the mouth of the Columbia to the confines of the United States; and coastwise, from California to the Pole—in brief, of monopolizing the traffic of the whole northern continent. One part of his plan was, that a vessel laden with goods for the Indian trade, should every year sail from New York to the Columbia, and, having discharged her cargo at the establishment there, take on board the produce of her year's trade, and thence proceed to Canton, bringing back the rich productions of China. Other ships were to be destined for New York and London, as no doubt was entertained, that all the British fur trading companies would be soon blown into thin air by this gigantic American project, and by the superior enterprise, skill, and integrity, of the free citizens!

Another part of the plan, Mr. Irving thus describes :—"As in extending the American trade along the coast to the northward, it might come into the vicinity of the Russian Fur Company, and produce a hostile rivalry ; it was part of the plan of Mr. Astor, to conciliate the good-will of that Company, by the most amicable and beneficial arrangements. The Russian establishment was chiefly dependent for its supplies on transient trading vessels from the United States. These vessels were often, however, of more harm than advantage. Being owned by private adventurers, or casual voyagers, who cared only for the present profit, and had no interest in the permanent prosperity of the trade, they were reckless in their dealings with the natives, and made no *scruple* of supplying them with fire-arms. The Russian government had made representations to that of the United States, of these malpractices on the part of its *citizens* ; but as they did not infringe any *municipal* law, our government could not interfere."

It is not necessary for me to fix attention here to the testimony borne by a reputable and patriotic, though reluctant, witness, to the infamous mode of conducting business, adopted by the Americans, at least in those regions ; or to the curious fact, that a despotic and semi-barbarous government should have been constrained to make a remonstrance to a professedly free, and boastedly enlightened government, on the infraction by its citizens of the common principles of humane, honest, and liberal dealing.

When the establishment was once founded, and the Company was in working order, the most extravagant reports were circulated, about the wealth to be found in Columbia by the new adventurers : not a moment, it was said, was to be lost, and consequently, many were lured to the enterprise.

The first ship chartered by this Company was the Tonquin, which sailed from New York in September, 1810, commanded by Captain Thorn. There were on board a few British subjects, going out to join the Company. But so inveterate was the anti-British spirit of the captain, that he treated them with every indignity, which led to constant quarrels during the voyage. On arriving at the Falkland Islands, some of the British went on shore. The captain, seeing this, gave orders to sail off; determined to leave them to perish. But a Mr. Robert Stuart, nephew of one of these gentlemen, who luckily remained on board, brought the citizen captain to a sense of humanity and justice, by holding a brace of pistols to his head, and threatening to blow out his brains, unless he took his uncle and his party on board.

On arriving at the mouth of the Columbia, on the 22d of the following March, the captain, against all remonstrance, as it blew a stiff breeze, sent the chief mate and four men to sound the channel. These all perished. The captain, on the 25th, despatched one of the officers, accompanied by four men, in the jolly boat, to sound again. This boat was also wrecked, but two of the crew escaped miraculously. At last the ship, with great difficulty, was worked into Baker's Bay. In July, she was despatched on a coasting and trading excursion northward. Having anchored opposite Newettee, in the vicinity of Nootka, they commenced a brisk trade with the natives. But the captain, by showing a tyrannical disposition, and inflicting chastisement on one or two of the principal Indians, for some trifling offence, their hostility and revenge became excited. The captain was warned, by his interpreter, and others, of the imprudence and danger of his conduct, but he spurned all advice, and did not relax from his stern conduct.

In a day or two the natives, with a show of friendship, renewed the trade, and went on board in great numbers, carrying large quantities of furs, and wearing short fur-skin cloaks, contrary to their usual custom. He was again warned of danger; and he again rejected all advice

—expressing his contempt of any attack made by half-naked savages against such a bold crew as his, who had plenty of cutlasses and fire-arms, ranged *below* deck. But he soon found that his arbitrary self-confidence was imprudent, and that arms ready for use *above* deck were better than when stowed away *below*. The Indians began, from their growing crowds, and their conduct on board, to become troublesome; and he ordered the deck to be speedily cleared. Then a loud *whoop* was raised, and from beneath every short cloak was suddenly snatched some formidable weapon, and, before the arms could be procured from below, the captain and the crew were slaughtered on deck, with the exception of three. These three contrived to escape from the ship in a boat, during the mêlée—having previously set a train to the powder-store. Soon after they quitted the ship, she blew up, and above two hundred of the principal savages perished with her. In the consternation produced by the explosion, among the crews of the numerous boats stationed around the ship, they were enabled to reach shore, but being prevented, by the state of the weather, from getting into the ocean, they were compelled to try an overland journey to Astoria. However, in a couple of days they were all captured, and slaughtered.

While these sad tidings reached the fort from the Pacific, other news of misadventure reached it from the interior. Their parties having been attacked by the Indians, failed in either establishing settlements, or securing a profitable trade. Though Mr. Astor had a good head, and spirit for projecting boldly and extensively, he either did not adopt, or could not adopt, the means of securing an effective enginery to work out his large and complex plans. In short, to use a vulgar, though very expressive designation, his instruments were "*a rum lot.*" The rise of his Oregon speculation was marked by misconduct and disaster, and its fall was equally inglorious.

This Company next chartered a ship, which had been sent out from America the following year, "the Beaver," freighted with a rich cargo of furs, and other valuable commodities—the produce of the country—for China, neither expense nor pains having been spared to equip her so as to make a favourable impression on the Chinese. The Company hugged the sanguine hope that they had laid the foundation of a permanent and lucrative trade with that people, and would soon, by spreading the sphere of their operations and settlements along the Pacific, outrival the British in that market. But their high-blown expectations were dashed all at once, for the disastrous intelligence arrived that war had been declared between Great Britain and America, and that the British had blocked up *the Beaver* in the port of Canton, nay, more, that they had blocked up every foreign port against the Americans. The desperate state of their affairs was now evident. They could hope for no succour by sea—all expectation of return of profits by "the Beaver," to which they mainly trusted, was at an end. They had no communication with their fellow-countrymen overland, and even if they had, the delay in announcing their condition and receiving back supplies would be too great; their own resources were fast wasting away: but, above all, as the British flag had swept every sea—occupied every port—and penetrated every inlet, they were in daily apprehension of the arrival of a British force to capture and demolish their settlement, and seize on their persons and property. Their apprehensions were well-grounded, for the British government considered them as enemies, and despatched a ship-of-war to take possession of Astoria. But they anticipated such a visit, and, before the arrival of the ship, had sold their establishment, whole stock in trade, implements, &c., to the Northwest Company; some of the members having enlisted in the service of this Company, most of the rest having returned to the States. Thus the settlement was entirely broken up, and the only duty the commander had to perform on his arrival, was to change the name of Astoria into that of Fort George.

CHAPTER XV.

Extension of the British to the north of the mouth of the Columbia—Contrast between the British and American mode of trading—Cape Flattery—Native tribes—The country—Settlements at Nesqually and Cowlitze—Fraser's River.

THE extension of the Company's trade northward, along the line of coast from Cape Flattery, and their establishment of a chain of trading-stations, coastwise and inland, became the necessary consequence of their mercantile importance, enterprise, and rivalry with the few American traders who hovered on those seas, and who, by introducing a sort of buccaneering commerce with the natives, tended much to the demoralization of the people, and tended but little, eventually, to the profit of the Americans themselves. These trading-stations, therefore, were not established more for the objects of trade, than they were for the purposes of civilization, and, while they have fully effected the first purpose, they are gradually and surely effecting the other. The consequence is—what may be expected from the relative position and conduct of the parties—the Americans, who twenty years ago carried on an extensive trade with the natives (though it was not on their side conducted on the soundest principles of morality) and who had considerable traffic with the Russians in their positions beyond the 54th degree of latitude, are now totally shut out from both. Whereas the British, who have ever dealt liberally and honestly with the natives, have a monopoly of the native trade, and have entered into such a contract with the Russians that they may be said to have a monopoly of this trade as well.

In the American mode of commerce with the natives there was no unity of purpose—no communion of interest—no fraternity of feeling—no system—no guiding spirit to direct and control it; but it was a loose, dissipated, jealous sort of thing—jealous, not only of British rivalry, but even of American rivalry—and eager to grasp at any article of trade, however worthless, and by any means, however unworthy; and hence losing the attainment of important objects. But the Company's mode of commerce was the very reverse. It was conducted on the most judicious and most methodical principles, and was guided by one master spirit, which ruled it even in its minutest operations, and absolutely interdicted the practice of any effort that was repugnant to justice—knowing that this would eventually recoil on themselves, and thus, by their example, holding out, even to their opponents, a practical lesson.

The Americans were not so much rivals of the Company as they were of one another; indeed they could never be said to be, in the strict sense of the word, rivals of the Company, for they had not the power, either as to capital, union, or sound notions of trade. I had many opportunities of witnessing this, when I was stationed on the northern posts, or employed in the Company's trading ships on that coast. Some of these maritime American traders, finding their own *independent* mode of trading a failure, have sold their ships to the Company, and enlisted in it as salaried servants or officers. I may mention one,—Capt. William M'Neil, of Boston, commander of the brig Lama. This gentleman has now, under the Company's principle of giving promotion as the reward of merit, risen to the station of chief-trader. Indeed most of the American traders now feel it their interest, if not guided by any sentiment of humanity, and conscientious duty, to follow in the wake of the Company,—to imitate its honest and prudent mode of dealing,—to conciliate its good opinion by this imitation, and to establish among the natives the persuasion that the white men *practise* what their religious men *inculcate*, i. e., honest discharge of the duties of this life, according to which there will be a commensurate reward hereafter. This is the invariable belief of the native tribes; and, according as the white men swerve from or follow in practice this great maxim of religion—a maxim which is, they say, the foundation of the white man's theology—they despise and hate, or respect and trust them. While I would shrink from attributing to the Americans, as a great national community of civilized men, the infamy of falsifying in practice, their professions of humanity, justice, and freedom, yet I must, as the honest recorder of things as I have seen them, say that the American traders, taken in the aggregate, in the Oregon, have not either corresponded with those principles of religion which even their own missionaries inculcate, or contributed much to raise the moral reputation of white men in the estimation of the natives. Their general conduct has come upon them with the retributive justice of its own reward. They are hated and distrusted by the natives, and have lost the great object of their cupidity—the trade.

Along the coast to the northward, after leaving Columbia River, the next important point is Cape Flattery—the southern entrance to Juan de Fuca Straits. The natives inhabiting this part are the Clatset tribe. They have not been so much affected with the fever and ague as the Chinooks, and therefore are more numerous. Salmon, and all kinds of wild-fowl, are plentiful. The natives manufacture some of their blankets from the wool of the wild goat; which is done with great neatness. The sea-otter is plentiful about these parts. The mode usually adopted in killing it is this: the natives, or the half-breeds, who now adopt all the customs of the natives, row out to the parts frequented by this animal, whose habits resemble those of the seal. Two men manage the canoe, while a third stands ready: and the moment the otter rises to the surface he is unerringly shot. When he feels himself hit he dives, and the boatmen dart after him, well aware of the direction he will take; and keep pace with him until he rises again. Then, unless he floats a dead carcass, he is a second time shot, and the chase is renewed, until he is at last killed. He is then hauled into the boat. Sometimes a sort of screen is erected on the shore, behind which the marksman lurks, and, when the animal comes to bask on the sands or the rocks, he is shot.

The Clatset Indians disfigure themselves by running bone rings, and other ornaments, through the lower division of the nose, and flatten their heads similar to the Chinooks and the Indians of the lower Columbia, and exhibit all the leading characteristics. The country here is covered with pine trees.

The south side of the straits from Cape Flattery takes a southeasterly direction. On the south side, and at some distance from the cape, there is a beautiful harbour, called New Dungeness. The country is high and woody, chiefly covered with pine trees. In the background there are very high mountains, the tops of which are completely enveloped in snow. The land by the shore is low and sandy, although high in the interior; yet there are beautiful plains, apparently as if they had been cleared by hand, which yield excellent pasturage, and are capable of high cultivation.

Further along the south shore there is another beautiful harbour, called by commander Broughton, Port Discovery; and as a shelter for this harbour from the northwest winds there is an island close by, called Protection Island. The land on this part of the straits abounds with deer and wild-fowl, and the waters with fish. The shores round the harbour are low and sandy, in summer covered with bushes, growing all kinds of berries. The Indians are not numerous; and, like the Chinooks, are rather dirty, the women bedaubing themselves with salmon oil, and vermilion clay. Besides these harbours there are several beautiful islands, at intervening distances, up the straits.

The country in the neighbourhood of Fort Discovery is moderately high, bounded on the west by mountains. The land, from the water-side, rises gradually; and is generally considered good. The wood is chiefly hemlock, which grows to a great height, pine, poplar, oak, and ash.

A few miles further up the straits, and from the north shore, there runs an inlet, called Admiralty Inlet. Up along this inlet, the country is beautiful; displaying plains interspersed with trees. Vancouver says, "To describe the beauties of this region, will, on some future occasion, be a very grateful task to the pen of a skilful panegyrist." The Indians in this neighbourhood resemble the other southern tribes.

Keeping along the straits, you approach Puget's Sound, running to the southward. Nearly at the southern extremity of this Sound, the Company has stationed a fort, called Fort Nasqually. This place was governed by a Mr. Kitson, in my time: he formerly was a lieutenant in a Canadian regiment, during the last American war, and then obtained distinction. His wife was the daughter of the Red-head chief, M'Donnel; about whose adventures many stories are told. This fort is surrounded by an extensive prairie country. The Company has a large farm here, for growing wheat, and other kinds of grain, potatoes, and all sorts of vegetables. They have also established there an extensive grazing farm, and sheep walk. The land is rather stony, but well adapted for a grazing farm.

The Company's agricultural and grazing projects here, which are on a large scale, are every day extending and improving. Besides all this, an association has been formed, on a large scale, for the purpose of rearing sheep, and laying the commencement of an extensive foreign wool trade. I have recently had a communication from that country, respecting this settlement; and the result is very satisfactory. The numerous flocks of sheep are thriving admirably; and there is every prospect of large exportations of wool, in a short time.

Some of the natives here live in the plains, and others on the banks of the Sound. Both these observe a marked aversion to mutual incorporation, and confine themselves to their distinct localities; the plain tribes not approaching the Sound; and the tribes bordering on the Sound not extending their rovings into the plains. This is the *general* rule. Their habits and food are in conformity with their condition: the one are fishers—the other, hunters, living on roots, dried, pounded, and kneaded into cakes; and on deer's flesh. All this country, both maritime and inland, abounds in all sorts of game—geese, ducks, plovers, partridges, &c. These are not only used for food: but are bartered with the Company's servants, for articles of use and ornament; such as blankets, tobacco, ammunition, and trinkets.

From this fort, to obviate the necessity of passing up the Sound, then westward along the Fuca Straits, and thence southward to the mouth of the Columbia, and crossing the bar in a vessel, there is a portage way across the land: the distance being about ninety miles from here to the banks of the Cowlitse River. This river runs from the northern interior into the Columbia, about forty-nine miles below Vancouver, in a southwesterly direction. At the end of this portage, on the river's banks, the retired servants of the Company are again numerously locating themselves, and forming an exclusively British settlement; as, at the Wallamette, the original settlers belonging to the Company's service were introduced on—and, in a great measure, swamped—by the Americans. This settlement is about eighty miles from Vancouver, and ninety from Nasqually; making it about one hundred and seventy miles by portage, from Nasqually to Vancouver. It promises great success. The settlers all fraternise with each other—are experienced and enterprising men—are well acquainted with the whole region of the Oregon, throughout its length and breadth—are attached to the interests of the Company—and are proud, and tranquil, every man of them, in living under the secure and unchangeable protection of British power, and British laws.

The first settlers were two Canadians, Fancault and Plomondeau, active and enterprising men belonging to the Company. Their contracts having expired, and they wishing to become farmers, were encouraged by Dr. M'Loughlin in their project to settle on the banks of the Cowlitze, rather than on the Wallamette; as in this place they were more likely to be under the exclusive protection of the Company. They were first rate *axe-men*, capable, each, of cutting the astonishing quantity of six cords of wood per day with ease. They were, while in the Company's service, overseers of the men employed in the erection of the wooden forts throughout the district. I mention their names, as the meritorious founders of a community, which promises so much prosperity, deserve to be recorded.

Fraser's River rises in the Rocky Mountains, between latitudes 55° and 56° north, near the source of Canoe River (which is the first large tributary of the Columbia, after the latter issues from its source; and at first runs about northwest for a distance of about eighty miles. It then takes a southern direction, receiving the waters of Stuart's River, which rises in one of the chains of lakes that abound in New Caledonia. It continues its southern course by west, receiving the waters of the Chilcotin, Pinklitsa, and several other minor rivers flowing from the lakes or hills of the west; and also the waters of Thompson's River, Quisnell's River, and others which flow into it from the east. In parallel 49° it breaks through the Cascade range of mountains in a succession of falls and rapids, and, running westward about seventy miles, is emptied into the Gulf of Georgia, in 49° 07' north. During this latter part of its course, for about seventy miles, it is navigable for vessels, after passing its bar, that draw twelve feet of water. Its whole length is about four hundred miles. The country along its lower section is hilly, and covered with forests of white pine, cedar, and other evergreen trees; and the soil is, generally, well fitted for pasturage, and, in many places, for tillage. But along the other, and more southern, sections, the country is more ungenial and unproductive; being cut up by mountains, ravines, torrents, lakes, and marshes. Yet it is well wooded; yielding all the varieties of trees growing in that region—fir, spruce, pine, poplar, willow, cedar, cypress, birch, and alder.

The climate is very variable; and the transitions are, though periodically regular, remarkably sudden, if not violent. During the spring, which lasts from April till June, the weather, and the face of the country, are delightful. In June, there are almost incessant rains, drifted furiously along by a strong south wind. In July and August, the heat is intense; and the ground, previously saturated with moisture, produces myriads of annoying flies and insects. This heat, and glaring sunshine, are succeeded, in September, by fogs of such palpable darkness, that, until noon, it is seldom possible to distinguish objects, at a longer distance than one hundred yards. In November, the winter sets in, speedily freezing the lakes and smaller rivers. The cold, however, is not so intense as might be imagined in such a country and climate.

In the interior, and upper country, the Company have forts in different parts stretching from the forty-eighth degree of latitude to the fifty-eighth, and have formed numerous establishments. The following are the names of some of the principal forts. Okanagan, Thompson's Fort, Fort St. James, Fort Alexander, M'Leod's Fort, Fraser's Fort. I should observe that Fort Langley is twenty miles from the river's mouth. Trees in this district are plentiful; but in most parts provisions are scarce; and at such an immense distance from Vancouver they cannot be carried in large quantities, the transportation being by land and horses. Mr. Peter Skine Ogden is the governor of this vast district. The principal food is salmon and various other fish; edible land animals and wild-fowl are scarce.

The Gulf of Georgia is connected with Johnson's Straits, and divides Vancouver's Island from the main land. At the northeast end of the island there is a numerous tribe called the Coquilths. The beaver and sea-otter are plentiful, as well as the hallibut fish, deer, and game.

I may here mention, that on my next expedition to this coast, in my former capacity of *trader* and *interpreter*—while Mr. Finlayson commanded as *chief factor*—in The Beaver, trading *steam-ship*, which anchored in this place, we made a very important discovery—a rich mine of coal near the surface. The cause of the discovery was as curious as the discovery itself was important. Some of the natives at Fort M'Loughlin having, on coming to the fort for traffic, observed coal burning in the furnace of the blacksmiths; and in their natural spirit of curiosity made several inquiries about it; they were told that it was the best kind of fuel; and that it was brought over the great salt lake—six months' journey. They looked surprised; and, in spite of their habitual gravity, laughed and capered about. The servants of the fort were surprised at their unusual antics, and inquired the cause. The Indians explained, saying, that they had changed, in a great measure, their opinions of the white men, whom they thought endowed by the Great Spirit with the power of effecting great and useful objects; as it was evident they were not then influenced by his wisdom, in bringing such a vast distance and at so much cost that *black soft stone*, which was in such abundance in their country. They then pointed out where it could be found of the richest quality close by the surface, rising in hillocks, and requiring very little labour to dig it out. This intelligence having been reported at Vancouver, we received instructions to make the necessary inquiries and explorations. Mr. Finlayson with a part of the crew, went on shore, leaving me in the ship, to conduct the trade; and after some inquiries and a small distribution of rewards, found, from the natives, that the original account given at Fort M'Loughlin was true. The coal turned out to be of excellent quality, running in extensive fields, and even in clumpy mounds, and most easily worked all along that part of the country.

The natives were anxious that we should employ them to work the coal; to this we consented, and agreed to give them a certain sum for each large box. The natives being so numerous, and labour so cheap, for us to attempt to work the coal would have been madness. They were greatly surprised when they first saw the steamboat, saying she could do any thing but speak; and the white man must have been assisted in the work by the Great Spirit. The Company has, since I left the country, established a large cattle farm in this island.

The country here, is, in point of beautiful scenery and fertility of the plains, although not so large, even superior to the Wallamette valley. It has beautiful runs of water, and clumps and groves of trees, of various kinds, scattered through the level lands—pine, oak, cedar, and spruce.

A little further along the straits from the Coquilths, and at the northern extremity of the island, is the Newettee tribe. This tribe, which now is rather pacific in its character, and not physically powerful, has been reduced to a skeleton of its former self, from the inroads of the savages who come from the northern and eastern continent to kidnap them, when on their fishing excursions, and then enslave them.

Some years ago an American vessel, which drifted on shore in foul weather, and through bad pilotage, was cut off here by the natives; and all hands were murdered, with the exception of the armourer and sail-maker.

These they spared, thinking they would be of service to them. They compelled them to join in their war parties. One of them soon died. Should a vessel come in to trade, they would not allow the survivor to go on board. But after several years had past in this miserable slavery, an American vessel came in to trade; and the survivor managed to make his condition known to the captain. The captain enticed several of the chiefs on board—placed them in safe keeping; and told them then, that unless they gave up the white man in their possession, he would run them up to the yard-arm. This intimidated them. The poor fellow was soon brought on board, to the great delight of the ship's company.

The length of the gulf and straits from Point Mudge is upwards of one hundred miles. The channel, although narrow, is free from rocks and shoals, but in some parts a most tremendous current runs. The land, in some places, both on the main land and the island, is very lofty; covered with pine-trees, actually growing out of *bare* rocks. The natives of this island amount in number to upwards of five thousand. Their houses are large, and are thus constructed. Immense logs are driven into the ground with large rafters, for the roof, placed in a slanting direction. The roof is covered with immense cedar boards, split from cedar-trees with wooden wedges made from knots of trees, and the sides are of cedar likewise, with curious figures, resembling men and animals, fantastically painted on them. Some of the principal houses will accommodate from two to three hundred people.

The chiefs often, in the winter months, give feasts to their people. The food consists of dog, seal, and whale-blubber, with berries, &c.

They manufacture blankets made from the inside bark of the cedar-tree. This is soaked in water for several days, then beaten between two pieces of bone. They set the thigh-bone of a deer, or a bone of similar size and strength, firmly, in a horizontal position, in a stand; on this they lay a large piece of bark, and keep beating it until it becomes soft like hemp. It is then woven together, and dyed with various figures upon it. They make their dye from roots. The blanket takes two women ten days to complete.

Gulls are very numerous about this place, as there are several rocky islets. Three or four of these lying near the north end of the island are called Scott's Islands. By going on shore in the months of June and July, in a short time bushels of eggs may be gathered on them.

Nootka Sound is to the west side of Vancouver's Island, in the 49° of latitude. The Company's vessels seldom visit this place for traffic, as there is now scarcely any fur to be found there. The land is high and woody, principally covered with large pines. And the natives resemble the more southern tribes in their customs, and general character.

At Millbank Sound, in June, 1833, the Company commenced building a fort, and were assisted by the crews of the vessels Dryad and Lama; the former commanded by Captain Kipling, the latter by Captain M'Neill. The land-department was superintended by Mr. Donald Manson, assisted by a Mr. Anderson, and myself; Mr. Anderson superintending the men. I had charge of the Indian-department; and with a complement of between forty and fifty Canadians and Scotchmen, set actively to work. The point pitched upon, was a bay about twenty miles up the Sound, in latitude 52° 6'. When the men first went on shore, it was like entering an impenetrable forest. They had not been there long before the trees began to fall; and in a few days a large open space showed itself. A place was soon cleared for tents to be pitched; and in the course of a month or two sufficient ground was cleared for the erection of the pickets, or posts, which are eighteen feet high, placed close together, for the inclosure of the fort. These answer instead of brickwork. As soon as the enclosure was finished, we despatched the brig Dryad to the southward, the Lama having previously left.

During the Dryad's stay with us, our men nearly came to battle with the Indians. One of the sailors cutting wood, on shore, had his axe stolen; and to obtain it, another of the men took a blanket from an Indian. This exasperated the natives; and they gave their signal. The Indians then began to muster from all quarters, furnished with fire-arms, knives, and axes; some of them taking position amongst the trees—others on the beach. Our land party being exposed to them, Mr. Manson thought it prudent to come to a parley; and hostilities ceased.

After the Dryad left, we pursued our work; the building of the fort progressed with great vigour; and during its erection, we pushed on a brisk trade in furs. I was appointed to the post of trader, acting under Mr. Manson, as governor of the fort. My instructions were to lower the price of skins; give in payment useful, substantial, and lasting articles; and endeavour to do away, if possible, with the injurious and degrading article of spirits, as a medium of barter: as the American vessels had previously been here, and had given immense prices, and sold spirits, so that the Company's vessels should be debarred from the whole trade. This exasperated the Indians against me; and they gave me the name of "*Shleepes*," i. e., "stingy:" and when near them, if I should spit, they would run and try to take up the spittle in something; for, according as they afterwards informed me, they intended to give it to their doctor or magician; and he would charm my life away. But they were much disappointed to find me there for sixteen months afterwards.

Every thing went on favourably until the month of October; when, to our surprise, one of our men deserted and joined these savages. He was a Canadian. And, as we were given to understand that he was with one of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the fort, called "Kyete's tribe" (Kyete being the chief's name—but nicknamed by an American captain, *Boston*), we sent for this chief: but previous, however, to this, we offered to give them blankets, ammunition, and other articles, if they would bring him back; but to no purpose. We, therefore, knowing the value the natives set on their chief, detained him in the fort, thinking this would induce them to come to terms: and we informed them unless our man was given up, we should send their chief to the governor at Vancouver. During this time we were living in the enclosure, which was not farther than ten feet from an impenetrable wood, in boarded, temporary houses and tents. The bastions were built, but we had not our big guns properly placed. Having so many men in the fort, our water became scarce; and to get more, we were obliged to go one hundred and twenty yards from the barrier.

On a particular day, seeing no Indians about, we proposed to allow some of the men to go out with buckets to get water. Mr. Anderson and myself went outside to see after them, while Mr. Manson kept a look-out within the enclosure, from a high temporary watch-tower. We had not been out many minutes, when, looking around the bay, and on a point of land about a quarter of a mile to the southward, we perceived a fire. At that instant, several Indians rose up—gave the war-whoop, and the fort was then surrounded with hundreds of these savages, —some armed with knives, others with guns and axes. Mr. Manson cried out, to arms. Mr. Anderson and myself rushed as fast as possible to the fort, and then to the bastions; from whence we commenced firing, along with the men that remained in the fort. This threw the Indians into confusion, and made them retreat, with some loss of life, into the woods. The whole of our outside men escaped unhurt into the fort, with the exception of two. One of these was a half-breed, who was surrounded by eight Indians. He was cut in the shoulder severely by an axe aimed at his head; after this blow he managed to wrest the axe from the Indian, and keep his assailants at bay; but another Indian coming up with a gun, was in the act of shooting him, when Mr. Anderson rushed to the fort-gate, and, with his rifle, shot the Indian. The others decamped, and the half-breed made his way into the fort. The other, a Canadian, had, before the disturbance, fallen down, with an axe in his hand, which had injured him. This man they took prisoner; dragging him, face downwards, to the water-side, and placed him, tied hands and feet, in a canoe; it being that night their full intention, had we not their chief in custody, to have burned him. During the night they kept up a continual whoop and firing of guns; but kept a long distance from the fort, fearing we should get our big guns to bear upon them. Having this poor fellow in their possession all night, they brought him in the morning under the fort, and announced a desire to speak to us: and finding their chief was safe, said if we would give their chief freedom they would return our man. The deserter they persisted they knew nothing of. Finding we could not get back the deserter, we proposed to give them their chief, provided our man, whom they had taken prisoner, was returned; and likewise we proposed that they should give us two inferior chiefs as hostages. This was done for a guarantee, to prevent any of our men from being attacked by them, in case they were compelled to go out of the fort. This was agreed to. The chief having been let free, our Canadian returned next morning; and the two Indians were kept as hostages to insure safety to our men on quitting the fort for business. The Indians requested us to hoist our flag, as a signal of peace. They informed us, that one or two Indians had been wounded in the previous conflict, and wished to know if they came, since peace had been proclaimed, whether we would dress their wounds; to this also we willingly conecuted, and the patients were restored quite recovered. This conduct on our part, in receiving and healing their wounded, made a very favourable impression on them: and they exhibited every pacific disposition. We kept, however, within the fort for several weeks, until their vindictive feeling would completely have cooled down; and by that time we became mutual friends. Trade then again commenced at a brisk rate; and we went on building and clearing ground as usual, for the completion of the fort, and the preparation of our little farm. As I began to speak their language, so I increased in favour with them.

These Indians differ greatly from the southern tribes in the prominence of their countenances and the regularity of their features, thus resembling the northern Europeans. They are rather dirty, using quantities of oil for the hair, and daub their faces with vermilion: this they use from their infancy. The shores here are high, and covered with trees. A little way in the interior are patches of plains, but rocky and covered with short grass and moss. In the neighbourhood, the wood consists of pine, hemlock, cedar, spruce, small fruit, crab, birch, and various kinds of berry bushes. The Indians are numerous, and divided into three different tribes. The chiefs are Wacash, Oyellow, and Kyete. Hallibut and salmon abound here—the salmon far inferior, and much smaller than the Columbia salmon—herrings, too, are found there in abundance: the spawn is gathered by the natives, and dried on sea-leaves for their winter provision. They likewise take the tender rind from the inside of the hemlock tree, and pound it into cakes, which they dry in the sun. The salmon is split down the back, and smoked, and dried for winter. Blankets are made, by the women, from cedar bark, in the same way as those made by the Coquilths, already mentioned. They have several villages that they shift to at different seasons of the year. Their winter villages are strong built houses, particularly those belonging to the chiefs. Here, as well as in Johnson's Straits, the chiefs entertain, at a public feast, the members of their several tribes. At these feasts the men sit on benches ranged on one side, near the wall, and the women are ranged opposite them. They also give public entertainments to the chiefs of the more inland tribes.

In their marriages, the Indian taking a wife, generally makes her friends presents,—a war canoe, dressed elk skins, beaver skins, and English goods, such as blankets, ammunition, &c., receiving presents from her friends in return. On the wedding-day they have a public feast, at which they dance and sing, sometimes in separate groups, sometimes all dance and sing together—men and women. In their singing, which is a sort of irregular chaunt, they all keep to the same key, and therefore it is not easy to distinguish any individual excellence among them. In their dances they throw their bodies into a variety of fantastic attitudes, and move their hands, keeping time to the music. On these occasions they are decked off in their best dresses and ornaments. They have one curious custom in their dances: at stated periods, they keep puffing from a painted tube, one end of which is inserted in the mouth, the other pointed upwards, quantities of fine down, which flies about their heads, presenting the imitation of a snow shower.

In the winter months these, as well as the neighbouring tribes, assemble in great numbers in the chief's house, for the purpose of witnessing the chief imitate different spirits, whom they are supposed to worship. He puts on, at intervals, different dresses, and large masks, of different kinds, entirely covering his head and neck. The masks are made to open the mouth and eyes by means of secret springs, invisible to the spectators, and different noises are sent forth. He dresses for each character behind a large curtain, drawn quite across the room, like the drop curtain in a theatre, and then comes forth, and stands on a sort of stage in front of it, while the spectators are ranged on benches placed along the side-walls. In one of his characters he imitates the rising sun, which they believe to be a shining man, wearing a radiated crown, and continually walking round the earth, which is stationary. He wears, on this occasion, a most splendid dress of ermine, and other valuable furs, and a curiously constructed mask, set round with seals' whiskers, and feathers, which gradually expand like a fan; and from the top of the mask swan-down is shaken out in great quantities, according as he moves his head. The expanding seals' bristles, and feathers represent the sun's rays, and the showers of down, rain and snow: the Indians chaunting at the same time, in regular order and in a low key, showing reverence, devotion, and awe.

Sometimes the various divine personages are represented by one man; sometimes there are two or three personators on the stage all at once, representing different divinities. Our men were often invited to witness these religious exhibitions; but the greatest silence, attention, and decorum were expected from them. Our attendance they considered a high compliment; and they invariably made us presents, generally of skins, before we departed. One of our people, a half-breed, a funny volatile boy, son of Mr. Manson, used to imitate, on a sort of many-barred fife, the noise made by the sacerdotal chiefs on the stage. The Indians, when they used to come to the fort, and hear this, seemed much amazed, and often begged of me to check him. After the conclusion of the ceremony they have a feast, consisting generally of seals' and dogs' flesh, salmon, boiled and roast, and different kinds of berries. During the representation and the feast, there is a large wood-fire in the centre of the room.

As I acquired a knowledge of their language, I was admitted to much of their personal confidence, and soon became interpreter.

There is one very remarkable peculiarity of their religious customs which deserves to be noticed: and if I had not personal evidence of its reality, I should be slow to bring myself to a belief of its actual existence. The chief, who is supposed to possess the "right divine" of governing, and to be the intermediate agent between the great solar spirit—the Creator and Supreme Ruler—and his creatures here below, retires at times, whenever he fancies himself summoned by the divine call, from the tribe, without giving them any previous intimation of his mission; and takes up his abode in the lonely woods and mountains, taking clandestinely with him a small stock of dried salmon for sustenance. When he is missed by his family, the report is spread abroad, and then it is known that he has gone to hold familiar converse with the Great Spirit, who will, within a short time, descend to give him an interview. Intelligence has then been procured, from the Indian who saw him last on that day, as to his route, and the district of the woods and hills to which he is likely to confine his wanderings; and a sacred boundary line is drawn round this district, within which it is a crime of profanation to pass, on hunting or fishing excursions, on pain of death. Should any unlucky Indian even meet this compound of chief and priest in his excursions, he is sure to be put to death, either by the chief himself, for he must be perfectly passive in the infuriated chief's hands, or, should the chief in his abstracted mood not attack him, he must, on his return to the tribe, acknowledge the guilt, and resign himself a voluntary victim. Should he conceal the fact of his meeting the chief, and should the chief on his return charge him with the fact, then he would undergo the most shocking torture. The duration of the chief's absence on this mission is irregular—at least it is long enough to exhaust his small stock of food, even with the utmost economy. It is often three weeks. When hunger pinches him (and he generally selects the most desert and dreary region, destitute of esculent fruits or roots) his imagination becomes inflamed, and what was before religion or superstition, becomes now frenzy; during which the fancied interview with the Great Spirit occurs. He returns at last to the village, the most hideous object in nature, with matted hair, shrunken cheeks, blood-shot eyes, and parched lips—his blanket, which is his sole covering, all hanging in shreds about him, torn by boughs and brambles—his face all begrimed with filth, animated with all the unnatural ferocity of a demoniac. His return is by night, and as uncertain as his departure. He does not first arrive generally at his own house, but rushes to some other, according to the blind caprice of his wildness, and instead of entering it by the door, he ascends the roof—tears off one of the cedar-board coverings, and plunges down into the centre of the family circle; he then springs on one of the full-grown inmates, like a famished wolf—wrenches with his teeth a mouthful of his flesh, from his limbs or body, which he convulsively bolts down, without any process of mastication, but barely chopping the lump once or twice for the purpose of easier deglutition. No resistance is made, for the sufferer thinks that he has been ordered by the Great Spirit to yield up a part of his flesh and blood, as a sort of peace or sin offering to the priest. The chief then rushes to another house in the same way, and makes the same hurried repast. *He* continues this process along other houses; until, in a *few* hours, he becomes exhausted, from the quantity of human living flesh that he has devoured. He is then taken home in a state of torpor, and thus remains, like an over-gorged beast of prey, for a couple of days. After his resuscitation he is languid and sickly, and, as he must not partake of the usual food for a certain time after he has got his fill of the human sacrifice, he goes on but slowly to convalescence.

I have been, more than once, in close connexion with one of these chiefs, after his restoration; and his breath was like an exhalation from a grave. The wounds inflicted by his bite, though held as sacred trophies, often proved mortal. Their mode of cure is this;—They apply eagle-down as a styptic to check the hemorrhage; and then apply a plaster, made of pine-tree gum. Several of the wounded and consecrated persons, after we established our fort, finding their own mode of treatment ineffectual, came to our surgeon (applying to me first, as interpreter) to have their rankling sores healed. They used to present a most hideous appearance; being jagged and torn, and often showing the clear indentations of the human teeth; and besides the fœtor issuing from them was most noxious. The daughter of one of the chiefs (who practised this abomination), the wife of one of our men, told me that her father, on his return to the village, after his sojourn in the woods and mountains, met an Indian, on whom he flew, and whose side he continued to bite and devour until his bowels protruded. The Indian made no resistance; and, when the chief ran off, he crawled to the village; and though every effort was made to heal his wounds, they were found to be too mortal for human remedy. He died soon afterwards, in their idea, a consecrated person. So much importance and pride do these Indians attach to these lacerations, that the youngsters, who have not had the good fortune to be thus scarred, apply lighted gunpowder to their limbs; and use other means to produce a holy gash.

An American vessel, some years previous to our visiting this place, was attacked by the natives, and part of the crew, as well as the captain, killed. About eight o'clock in the morning the vessel was boarded by some of the chiefs; and numerous Indians mustered round the vessel in canoes showing quantities of furs. Most of the sailors were up aloft, loosing the sails to be aired. The chiefs called the captain to the gangway to look at the furs; and while he was in the act of looking at them, one chief on each side of him plunged a knife in his side, after that they pitched him overboard. The women in the canoes cut him to pieces with their sharp paddles when he rose to the surface. The natives, on this signal, rushed on deck, and a terrible conflict ensued. After many of the crew were slaughtered, with a great number of the savages, the remaining sailors contrived to slip the anchor and sail off to the northward. They were picked up in a very crippled state, by another American ship, who afforded them every assistance, and enabled them to reach Boston.

I often mentioned this shocking occurrence to the natives, with the object of sounding their dispositions and feelings. The general tenour of their remarks showed me that they regretted it as an imprudent act, which would recoil on themselves, by awakening the apprehensions of the white men, and urging them to a more guarded and less liberal mode of dealing;—that they considered it, in the abstract, cruel and treacherous; but then they used to palliate the act by strong insinuations that, as the class of white men to whom the ship belonged, had no great sympathy with them; and indeed showed every disposition to cheat and harass them, there ought not to be raised such an outcry about the matter; for sooner or later they should be obliged to fight in their own defence; and that they then thought a favourable opportunity should not be lost. Kyete, the chief who gave the captain his mortal blow on deck, often told me, that plunder was not their exclusive object; but that he was induced, in a fit of rage, to strike the captain, when he found him exhibiting a dishonest and domineering disposition. He regretted, he said, the occurrence deeply; and it would never have occurred, he was sure, if the ship belonged to the great Company; for the Company would not wish to rob the Indians, as the captain intended. And he used to appeal to me, whether I did not think, that, from the conduct of the tribe to us, our whole crew would be safe (even if the ship were left unguarded to swing at anchor) before one of his remote villages. I used to give him a reply of general consolation and civility, without expressing any decided opinion of the matter. I certainly had no fear of a similar attack, for three good reasons: we were too much on the alert; we dealt liberally and honestly with them; and the generally believed power of the Company was a tower of strength.

I often conversed with these people on the cardinal points of religion; and they always seemed glad to hear the subject. They used to say, we know the Great Spirit is good, and that he made us and the world;—that the evil spirit is bad, and has hoofs and horns; and that the bad will be punished hereafter.

CHAPTER XVI.

Fort M'Laughlin—Voyage from it all along the intricate inlets or canals—Various tribes—their appearance, and customs.

FORT M'Laughlin is about one hundred and twenty yards square, having two bastions standing at right angles; in each of these are four nine-pound guns, with a quantity of small arms, ready for action. It is surrounded with pickets, *i. e.*, trees, cut eighteen feet long, where no branches have run out, and about twenty-four inches in circumference. These pickets are mortised into a large square log placed firmly in the earth. The pickets are placed so close together that they cannot even be seen through. There are double gates at the entrance, with a small wicket gate in them. At the top of the pickets there is another large log, into which the pickets are mortised, and at the top are placed long spikes. Inside the fort, round the pickets, and about four feet and a half from the top, is a gallery run round the fort. Here a watchman is continually kept on the look-out, and a one-pound swivel placed over the gate: this protects the gateway. On the inside of the gate, on entering the fort, stands the Indian hall. A certain number of Indians are only allowed to enter for trade at a time; this hall is intended for them to wait in until they trade. Another man is constantly kept at the gate to let the Indians in and out. Adjoining the hall are the trader's house, and a house for the officer in charge of the men. On the left, on entering the fort, is the Indian shop and store, for the Indians to trade, and the trader's outfit. Adjoining this is a place for holding provisions traded from the natives, such as deer, hallibut, salmon, and wild-fowl. On the right-hand side of the fort is a long building, divided into rooms, for the men. At the end of this is a very neat house, part of which is converted into a mess-room. At the further end of the fort, fronting the entrance, is Mr. Manson's house, divided into several rooms, all of which are very neat and compact. On the left of the fort is a long warehouse for the reception of the general outfit which is sent once a year, by a vessel, from Vancouver. There are other small buildings, such as the blacksmith's shop, and carpenter's shop, and the kitchen, to which are attached the cook's and steward's rooms. The Indians are all kept near the gate and Indian hall; they are not allowed to enter the fort square, with the exception of the chiefs. These are sometimes allowed to visit the governor's house, where they get some biscuit and molasses and a little weak spirits and water. The Indians generally behave themselves very well, when inside the fort; but as they are much addicted to thieving (at which they are most expert), we kept a constant watch over them. But all our vigilance was often futile. I have known vessels when lying in the neighbourhood of this place trading, to have been pilfered of both canister-shot and powder, taken out of the big guns.

Having quitted Fort M'Loughlin in 1834, in the brig Dryad, I returned to the Columbia, and was there stationed till the middle of 1836; having passed some time at Fort Vancouver, and been stationed at Fort George as superintendent. I then returned to Fort M'Loughlin, in the "Beaver" steamer, in the character of trader and interpreter, and was happy once more in the society of its first governor,—my old friend Mr. Manson, than whom, I must say, there is not in the Company's service a more persevering, acute, zealous, and honourable, and therefore efficient, trader;—feared and trusted by the natives, and esteemed by the servants. I am happy, too, in saying that he has had his long-merited reward, in official promotion, and in the Company's increased estimation of his excellent qualities. During the interval between my departure and return, I found that Mr. Manson, although reduced to a short complement of men, had made many great improvements at the settlement. A large tract of ground had been cleared round the fort, where potatoes and other vegetables were growing. Several large buildings had been erected inside the fort. The bastions were all complete, with the large nine-pounders staring us in the face. And the Indians were brought to a quiet and well-behaved course of conduct. No further disturbance had occurred in my absence.

Chief factor Finlayson was on board the steamer with us, reconnoitring the coast; Captain Home was commander, late of the East India service, Mr. Dodd chief officer. We had on board upwards of thirty hands.

It was the intention of Mr. Finlayson, under whose instructions all our scheme of proceeding was to be conducted, to push on along the numerous and intricate inlets (that interlace the whole country) as far as possible inland, in order to come as much within reach of the interior tribes as possible. Therefore we ran into their uttermost extremities, along almost the whole of the labyrinth; stopping sometimes to trade, and ascertain the capabilities of the country, and the character of the natives, who had never seen a large vessel (and especially a steamer) or a white man before. The country had the main characteristics of that about Millbank Sound.

Some of the natives showed a flattened forehead, but not a compressed head. Indeed, generally, they are a well-featured and muscular race, but suspicious and rather treacherous. Along these inlets, many of which are the mouths of rivers, the tribes are clustered in villages,—especially towards the interior.

At Fort M'Loughlin we took on board about twenty-six cords of wood, for fuel, which was ready cut for us; this generally lasted us, when running on, between three and four days. From here we ran inland, up different inlets, called canals, which run out of Fitzhugh's Sound, a little to the southward of Fort M'Loughlin. Up these canals we proceeded about a day's voyage. The land along these canals is lofty, and covered with pine, apparently growing out of rocks. In some places these canals are clear running all through; at other places the navigation is occasionally obstructed.

About twelve at noon, on the second day, we reached a place called, by Vancouver, "Bentick's Arms"—inhabited by a tribe of Indians—the *Bellaghchoolas.* Their village is near Salmon River; where Sir Alexander M'Kenzie came down from the interior, during his survey, and, by observation, found he must be near the Pacific Ocean: and in case any vessel should run to this place to trade, he made a mark on a large rock; which was partly distinguishable when we were there. He named this Salmon River, on account of the quantities of salmon he saw in it. Though we arrived in the salmon season, we could not prevail upon the natives to sell us one, unless cooked by themselves; as they, as well as the Chinooks, and other tribes, fancy that cutting the salmon crossways "sends them away," and they will have none for their winter provisions. We traded numbers of furs from them, but nothing else.

The land here is high; as in other parts, entirely covered with trees—not a patch of clear land to be seen.

We likewise visited another large tribe of Indians to the southward, up a canal running out of Johnson's Straits, far into the main land. We took, from Milbank, an Indian, as interpreter. It took us, from the straits, a day and a half to reach its extremity. The land along the shore was high and woody—completely covered with pine trees—not a patch of clear ground to be seen. The natives appeared to be milder-looking tribes than those nearer the ocean. It runs upwards of one hundred miles inland, from Fort M'Loughlin, in a southeasterly direction. On running, with the steamboat, up this canal as far as possible, on the second day, we came to a stop—the water became shallow; and we anchored in a small bay. Several natives came to us in canoes, and told us the village was up a small river, and entreated us to go thither: but our Indian interpreter wished us not. However, the captain was anxious, and pressed me to accompany him; to which I consented. We manned our whale-boat; and we were well armed. No one had been up this place since Captain Vancouver's boats were up here, surveying; and the Indians, after we had been there a little time, began to muster in great numbers. We put ourselves on our guard, and set a regular watch to mark their manœuvres.

The village we visited was up a small shallow river, about two miles long, with scarcely water sufficient for our boat to go up. In this river, we fell in with two large canoes, on their way to the vessel. When we arrived within a quarter of a mile of the village, the Indians flocked from the bush in great numbers, on to the banks of the river, armed with guns, and bows, and arrows. Seeing our boat full of men, and our musketoons fixed on the gunwale of the boat, they got an impression that we were coming to attack their village, and exhibited a hostile spirit. They understood a little of the Milbank tongue. I therefore gave them to understand that we were peaceably inclined, and had only come to trade with them, and to visit their village. Having eleven men in the boat, the captain, myself, and three men, went on shore to visit the houses; leaving six men in the boat, and giving them instructions to pull into the middle of the stream, and lie abreast of the village. The natives there appeared to be friendly towards us; and made us presents of some skins and shells; but expected something in return—which they got. They showed us different wooden idols, some resembling the dog—and some, men. The village was very large, and enclosed with pickets, about eight feet high. This was to preserve the village from being attacked by the interior tribes. I saw, on a tree, a small coffin, with a covering over it, and a human image, cut out of wood, and painted. They informed me that this was the corpse of a child that had been killed by their enemies when attacking their fort, some time before; and they had placed it there with this idol by its side, as a memorial of their cruelty in slaying an innocent. Quantities of berries and dried salmon were stowed away in their houses for winter. There could not be less than from five hundred to six hundred Indians belonging to this village. The women seemed to be much afraid of us, as were also the children. I asked the reason; and was informed that it was the first time they had ever seen a white man in their lives. They seemed anxious to detain us at the village as long as possible: but our men informed us that the water was fast falling; and that we should not, if we remained longer, be able to get back. I had no doubt that they wished to detain us, from some sinister design, until the tide had ebbed, so as to bar our departure: and we rowed off. On our arrival at the ship, our interpreter informed us that some of the Indians had been there, and said we should never return again. He (the interpreter) had been—we were informed by Mr. Dodd, the chief officer—a long way up the rigging, with the spy-glass, anxiously looking out for us. The officers, and likewise the men, were glad to see us heave in sight with the boat.

The country up the river, as far as the village, appeared low, covered with berry-bushes. Pine and alder appeared to be the principal wood. The interior, I have not the slightest doubt, is a plain country.

We sent our wood-cutters on shore at this place, and renewed our stock of wood; the Indians assisting in carrying it to the beach, and bringing it alongside the vessel in their canoes; for which we gave them some tobacco: and having procured what furs we could, we again run down the canal into Johnson's Straits—from thence along Fitzhughes's Sound to Fort M'Loughlin; where we again took in our complement of wood, and ran for the northward, after leaving Milbank Sound. The entrance of Milbank Sound is by low rocks, and a rising land, called Cape Swain, and lies in latitude 52° 13'; the northwest point of entrance is Point Day, off which lie several rocky, barren islets. In passing, numerous seals, sea-elephants, and sea-lions, with other monsters of the deep, can be seen lying, when the sun is out, basking on the rocks.

The Indians at the Milbank Sound, called Belbellahs, are very ingenious and imitative. They watched sharply all our proceedings, and gave us striking examples of their native talent. They promised to construct a steamship on the model of ours. We listened, and shook our heads incredulously; but in a short time we found that they had felled a large tree, and were making the hull out of its scooped trunk. Some time after, this rude steamer appeared. She was from twenty to thirty feet long, all in one piece—a large tree hollowed out—resembling the model of our steamer. She was black, with painted ports, decked over; and had paddles painted red, and Indians, under cover, to turn them round. The steersman was not seen. She was floated triumphantly, and went at the rate of three miles an hour. They thought they had nearly come up to the point of external structure: but then the enginery baffled them; and this they thought they could imitate in time, by perseverance, and the helping illumination of the Great Spirit.

They bury their dead amongst rocks, placing in their coffins, as the Chinooks do, articles for their use in the next world. They believe, that after they are dead, they are taken in a canoe along a dark lake, for a long distance; and then come to large gates. These gates are opened as they approach. There are, beyond these, two rivers—one branching to the right; the other, to the left. If they have done good, and not committed murder, they will go to the right; where there is salmon in abundance, berries of all sorts growing continually, and the sun always shining. On the left, there is continual snow and frost, misery, and starvation.

These Indians deal in slaves, purchased from the southern tribes—the original kidnappers—and then sell them, at a profit, to the northern tribes, who come down to purchase them. A full-grown, athletic slave, who is a good hunter, will fetch nine blankets, a gun, a quantity of powder and ball, a couple of dressed elk-skins, tobacco, vermilion paint, a flat file, and other little articles.

After leaving Point Day, and taking a northerly course, instead of going out into the open ocean, the Company's vessels generally keep inland, along the canals De Larado and Delprincipe. The country along these canals is inhabited by a numerous tribe of Indians, called the Sebassa tribe; differing in many points from the more southern tribes. They are more active and enterprising than the Milbank tribes, but the greatest thieves and robbers on the coast. They are scattered about along the canals, but the principal residence of the chief is either at Land-Otter Harbour, or Seal Harbour. In each of these harbours there is good anchorage for vessels.

They build their villages, chiefly, upon high and precipitous rocky islands, or promontories; having steps cut down to the water. This is done to prevent any sudden attack from an enemy. The chief, Sebassa, has twenty wives, and numerous slaves; and is accounted to be one of the wealthiest on the coast. They go in bands, in their canoes, to the southward, and, unawares, kidnap the Indians, when out fishing, or gathering berries. These are then taken inland, and traded as slaves. Some of these Indians, from their trading intercourse with the British and American ships, speak a little English. They bring large quantities of various kinds of fur-skins for barter—beaver, bear, raccoon, otter, fox, seal. Their food, and manner of living, resemble the Milbank tribe. They give feasts and dances; and have religious ceremonies, and religious masquerades, or theatrical representations, similar to those of the Nootka Sound tribes. The shores are high and rocky, covered with pine and cedar-trees. The natives are great gamblers; and, as well as the more southern tribes, resemble the Chinooks in their games. The seal are numerous; and are either shot, when lying on the rocks, or most dexterously speared, when floating, in the same manner as a whale.

One day, running along these canals, we had on board one of these Indians, to show us the different harbours; but it became very foggy, so that we could scarcely see the ship's length before us. The Indian, having a large hat on, resembling the top of a small parasol, made of the twisted fibres of the roots of trees, with an aperture in the inside, at the broader end, to fit his head. He stood upon the quarter-deck—took off his hat—and informed me that he intended to charm the fog away; for which I was to give him some tobacco. To this I consented. He murmured some few words; and with his hand, pretended to gather the fog into his hat. He then, all of a sudden, dropped his hat on the deck, as if he had something in it; and, after holding it, mouth down, for some minutes, and murmuring some more words, informed me that the fog would soon be gone. The fog, in about half an hour, did happen to clear away fast. He then assumed a proud and self-confident air; and assured us that it was all the work of his "conjuration and mighty magic." I saw no necessity for offending or provoking him by any expression or sign of dissent or incredulity; as we were in a great degree under his guidance, in those intricate and narrow guts. Of course the fellow, from his knowledge of the climate and the locality, was weather-wise; and could tell the appearance and disappearance of those periodical fogs. I gave him his tobacco, and a little more, with which he was highly pleased.

The only covering the men have, is a large blanket thrown round their bodies. The women have a loose, figured calico shirt over them, with a piece of coarse cloth thrown across their shoulders—the calico having lately superseded the former skins. Both male and female daub themselves over with vermilion. They wear large rings through the nose; some of these rings being bone—others, silver; made by themselves, from dollars purchased from American traders. As ornaments for their wrists, they have bracelets, made from brass wire. Their hair is very long; for which they use a great deal of seal and salmon oil. When a relation, or parent, dies, they put themselves in mourning, by cutting the hair quite close, and blacking the face and neck, for some months. Both men and women bore large holes through their ears; from which they suspend red worsted threads, plaited and knotted, and hanging down about eight inches, instead of ear-rings.

The old women disfigure themselves, by having a slit cut right through their lower lip, crosswise, from one end to the other. They then have a piece of hard wood, or bone, made the length of the cut; rounded at the end, about two inches long, half an inch broad, and a quarter of an inch thick. This is inserted in the slit, inside, between the lip and gum; making the lower lip project out about one inch beyond the upper. The sight is hideous. Our men used jocosely to say, this lower lip would make a good slab to lay their trousers on, to be scrubbed. Shell-fish, of every kind, are plentiful.

The general character of the country, as we proceeded northward, wore the same aspect—rocky, woody, and mountainous. From the 47° to the 54°, there is a complete net-work of inland navigation—sounds, bays, inlets, harbours—safe all through, for all vessels. This I can attest, as I have run through the whole course several times, by steam and sail.

CHAPTER XVII.

Fort Simpson—The surrounding country; and the various tribes.

At the termination of the canals crossing Chatham Sound, is Fort Simpson, in latitude 54°, named after Mr. Simpson (now Sir George Simpson), of York Factory, and governor of the whole of the Hudson's Bay Company's territory. This fort is situated near Point Wales, on a small island in the sound, opposite Dundas Island, and near the northern termination of the British territory.

Fort Simpson is built after the model of most of the other forts. The governor is John Work, Esq., chief trader, an Irish gentleman, who has been for many years in the Hudson's Bay Company. Surrounding the fort, is a large and fruitful potato and vegetable garden. The officer conducting the Indian department is Mr. John Kennedy, a medical doctor, son of the late chief factor Kennedy, many years attached to the Hudson's Bay Company. The fort is built in a beautiful bay, with excellent anchorage for shipping.

The Indians are the Náss tribe, who are very numerous, and in customs and language resemble the Sabassa Indians, with whom they intermarry; indeed, both these tribes appear to be offshoots from one parent stock. The principal chief is Ilgeak, whom they designate by the title of Wil-áke Smoket, *i. e.*, the mighty chief: and in truth, if a gigantic person, a stately air, a noble mien, a manly port, and all the characteristics of external dignity, with a symmetrical figure, and a perfect order of European contour, would qualify any one for that title, he fully deserves it. Were he exhibited in London, with his harem, he would beat all exhibitions of American Indians out of the field. The whole race, generally speaking, are a fine body of men. But the old women adopt the shocking custom of slitting the lower lip, and inserting the piece of bone or wood. It seems that some preparation has been made for this in their youth: the young women have small holes bored through the lower lip, and a piece of round silver placed in it, projecting out about three-quarters of an inch. This aperture gradually grows wider with age; and affords a facility for a final gash. They wear gowns, made of calico. These are made loose, similar to a shirt; but, to show their shape, they have stays, made of cloth, ornamented with pearl buttons. These are drawn round them quite tight. They also wear a blanket, thrown across their shoulders. Their hair is long, parted in front, and behind, is bound round with a piece of scarlet cloth, which hangs down like a tail.

These northern tribes burn their dead, and deposit the ashes in a box, in a secluded spot in the woods. When a chief dies, he is, before interment, dressed up—his face painted—and placed sitting up, in a canoe, and paddled round the maritime village, looking almost like life. The magicians, or doctors, wear very long hair. They carry images of their gods and spirits in a box, which is kept sacred, and is scarcely ever seen by the vulgar. They have great power over the tribe; and some of the Indians stand in great fear of them; for if a doctor owes them a grudge, he will, they think, charm away their life. I have been told by a doctor himself, that sometimes an Indian's wife, sister, or daughter may die, and the Indian, supposing the doctor to have charmed away her life, will avenge himself on the doctor. Amongst the southern tribes, murders have been committed by the Indians on the doctors.

The oil which they eat with the various kinds of dried fish, is made from sprats, and in the following manner. In the centre of their huts they have a fire, and a quantity of these fish are placed in a large square bucket with water: then hot stones are kept constantly thrown in amongst the fish, with a pair of wooden tongs. The oil rises to the top of the water, and a person is kept in attendance to skim it off. After standing until cold, it is quite white and thick. They also make seal oil from the blubber. Quantities of deers' and goats' grease are traded from them. Bears' grease might be obtained here in abundance; as the black and brown bear are numerous. Deer, and all kinds of wild-fowl, are also plentiful. The principal fur is the beaver, marten, sea-otter, land-otter, minx, cross-fox, and silver-fox, and squirrels.

About the month of September, various tribes, who are friendly with the Náss Indians, visit the fort, and encamp around it: then the fort is surrounded with hundreds of Indians. The principal tribes visiting at this time, are the Tongarse, Kegarnie, Port Stewart, and Stikein. More northern tribes come from the Russian possessions; and the Indians from Queen Charlotte's Island, called the Massets, Comshewars, and Sketigets. At this time there are all kinds of dancing, singing, and feasting amongst them. Trade is kept up at a brisk rate at the fort, which is made in a manner a lively show booth.

The Indians coming from distant parts to this fort, have large canóes, from thirty to fifty feet long, the paddles resembling those of the Chinooks, and are managed in the same manner. Besides containing numerous Indians, their canoes are piled up with goods for barter. They remain mustered here for some weeks, making the fort a complete fair. It requires strict and good management, at this time, by the Company's officers, to protect the fort. On landing at the fort, their canoes are piled up in large heaps, covered over with mats, to keep the sun from cracking them. They bring provisions with them, to last during their stay and journey home. Feasts are given by the chiefs; and invitations sent regularly round to the different guests. Should any of the officers of the Company be invited, stools are placed by the side of the fire, covered over with cloth and fine calico; and they are introduced with great ceremony—the chiefs standing to receive them. Skins are given, as presents, to the officers; and, in the course of a day or two, the trader returns the compliment, by making them presents of British manufactured clothing.

After the various tribes have finished their trading speculations, and paid their various visits of friendship to one another, and the officers, they launch their canoes, laden with the return goods; striking up an Indian voyage song with great glee.

The Indians inhabiting the vicinity of the fort are tall, well proportioned, and more active and cleanly than the southern tribes. The women are about the same height as the Chinooks, but much more cleanly, particularly the young women—all of them better clad; wearing, as before mentioned, a loose gown. They have slaves, who do the principal drudgery. These slaves, in barter, fetch a larger price to the northward than they do to the south; and are sold by the Náss tribe to the various inland tribes, for furs. These furs they again sell to the white traders for blankets, and other articles of use or luxury.

Numbers of the young men among the northern tribes speak broken English, picked up from the various American vessels, that used to frequent these parts, and from the Company's servants. Amongst these tribes are numbers of American half-breeds, both men and women: some of the latter as fair as English females: some with light hair, and some few with quite red hair.

The country surrounding the fort is high and woody. The wood consists of pine, spruce, cedar, and cypress, with various *runs* of water, coming from the interior mountains. It abounds with deer, duck, and geese: hallibut, salmon, and herring. Berries, of all kinds, grow in abundance, which are gathered by the women, and dried for winter provisions.

Their religion resembles that of the other tribes, who think the sun is the great ambulatory spirit, who makes his daily tour of inspection over the stationary earth; and that the moon is his subordinate nocturnal watchman. On one occasion I explained to a chief that it was the earth that moved round, and not the sun. He said he always put faith in what I had previously told him, but never should any more, as I was only deceiving him.

They are very much afraid of the small-pox, which, in 1835, had made dreadful ravages amongst them—more amongst the families of the chiefs, than among the inferior classes; perhaps because these did not lead so sedentary a life, and were not so highly fed. Most of the men employed by the Company here take wives, principally from the Tongarse, and Kegarnie tribes; these being the most cleanly of all the Indians on the coast.

Their dress resembles, for the most part, that of the Náss women, but is of finer texture—the cloak ornamented with pearl buttons—the stays outside the gown, of scarlet cloth, so as to show off the shape, similarly ornamented—silver rings through the nose, and on the fingers—several bracelets on the arms, and strings of braided silk depending from the ears. Both men and women have a handsome and regular expression of countenance: in complexion and contour resembling Europeans. This may be averred of most of the natives in these latitudes.

During the time the opposition was kept up between the Company and the Americans on this coast, this tribe, as well as the other northern ones, used to designate the Americans by the name of *Boston fellow*,—the British, as *King George fellow.* And the old chief of this tribe, named Neeccote, often told me that he observed a small variation in phraseology, and even in pronunciation, between the British and Americans, which he used thus to express: "small change 'em, speak 'em, king George fellow, Boston fellow;" *i. e.*, the Bostonians and British speak the same language, but with a small change.

This old chief was very much attached to the British, and gave, as a legacy to Mr. Ogden, two beaver skins, stating that when he died he wished a coffin to be made, and to be buried in it after the British fashion, and in their burying-ground near the fort, by the side of Lieutenant Simpson—a gentleman who was commander of the Company's shipping in the Oregon, and who was buried close to Fort Simpson. But as I had left that part of the country before his death, I did not hear whether his family allowed him to be buried as he wished, or whether he was placed in the woods amongst the dead remnants of his tribe.

The principal harbour of Tongarse, which lies within the Russian territory, is round like a basin, with a sandy bottom, the soundings from eight to twenty fathoms. The land, for some distance, is low, interspersed with the usual sorts of wood found in these latitudes. The interior is dotted with small plains and lakes. The soil is good. Deer, salmon, with various other fish, as well as wild-fowl, abound here. This harbour is said to be the best on this part of the coast whence to obtain spars, and other wood, for shipping. The Americans as well as the British, were prevented visiting these harbours for trade, as the Russians began to cast a jealous eye upon them, and set armed vessels in the various ports, which they called their territory, for the protection of their trade. Therefore the Company and the Americans had to confine themselves within the 54° of latitude.

The Kegarnie tribe, also in the Russian territory, live on an immense island, called North Island. They resemble the Tongarse Indians, both men and women, in appearance, dress, and customs. The country is rocky, and highly covered with pine and spruce trees, and with a light pasture mould. Fish, seal, and berries constitute their principal food. Some of the Indians' teeth are actually worn down close to their gums, from continually eating hard dried salmon. There is a chief of this tribe who is a half-breed American, and goes by the name of George Bennett; and is said to be a son of Captain Bennett, who was, many years ago, in charge of a vessel from Boston, trading on the coast. This young Bennett speaks English very well. I asked him if he would not like to go to America or England? He answered "no!" as he considered we were slaves—even our chiefs—who were always doing something from necessity, and as we were always at work for a living. "I have slaves," said he, "who hunt for me—paddle me in my canoes,—and my wives to attend upon me. Why should I wish to leave?"

Although the jealousy of the Russians prevents the British entering their ports for trade, the Indians prefer trading with the British, therefore they travel for miles, with their large canoes laden with furs, to Fort Simpson.

The Stikein tribe live much further north, approaching the chief Russian settlement of Sitka, at the top of Clarence's Straits, which run upwards of one hundred miles inland. These Indians speak the same tongue as the Tongarse, and are intermarried with them. Furs are numerous amongst them, and of a good quality. It is a mountainous country, some of the mountains continually covered with snow. Here, as in other parts of the coast, the wood consists of pine, spruce, and cedar.

A little to the northward of this there is a tribe called the Chilhasts. In their country great quantities of virgin copper are found. Some of it is worked by the natives into a kind of shield, about two feet and a half long, and one foot broad, with figures of men and animals engraved upon it. The labour and ingenuity expended in working one of these shields, give them great value. One of them is estimated as worth nine slaves, and is transmitted as a precious heir-loom from father to son.

Before leaving Fort Simpson, it may not be uninteresting to give a sketch of a slight disturbance which originated through one of the Indian women. During the time a large body of the Indians were encamped round the fort for trade, one of them, a Port Stewart Indian, became jealous of his wife, who was a Tongarse. In his jealous fit he beat his wife most tremendously. Her sister, who saw this, ran up with a clasp-knife in her hand—plunged it into the man's mouth, and cut his cheek close up to his ear. He would eventually have bled to death, had not Dr. Kennedy of the fort, attended him. The woman fled. A regular feud was thus generated, and the friends of both parties prepared for all the stratagems of barbarous revenge and warfare. A fellow-tribe-man, and particular friend of the wounded man, lay day and night in wait for the woman. This one of the woman's friends and relations discovered, and he, too, lay in wait for the skulking assassin until he found him, and shot him dead. These accumulated wrongs stopped all avenues of peaceful negotiation, and war to the very *pole of the battle axe*, was declared between the tribes. The Port Stewartites managed to come upon part of the Tongarse tribe at night, near their village, and killed several. The Tongarse Indians, anxious *then* for peace, offered to make compensation, with slaves and blankets, to the dead man's friends, as well as for the "man injured in the mouth;" this they readily accepted. But after this negotiation the Port Stewart Indians swerved from their contract, and fitted out another war party to attack the village. But some of the Tongarse tribe being in the wood, saw them, and roused the village. The enemy, seeing this unexpected resistance, fled. But the Tongarse Indians chased them, and, having found thirty of them in a deep hole in the wood, surrounded with rocks, commenced a deadly fire upon them, and destroyed them as the Blackfeet would a herd of buffalo. Thus terminated the war at that time. But the Fort Stewart tribe, when I left the country, were filled with revenge, and only waiting for their opportunity.

Their houses are of the same construction as those of the Chinooks, but much larger. Their favourite dish is seal, but they most frequently feed off dried salmon and oil. The brown, black, and gray bear are numerous in these northern parts, as are wolves, which, during the winter months, come near the fort, howling in hundreds, with their whelps, for hours. The Indian dogs resemble the wolf very much, having a sharp nose, and a long, bushy tail; being a cross breed from the wolf, they are famous dogs for running deer down in the woods, and are often used by the Indians for that purpose—particularly in winter, when the snow is on the ground, driving the deer from the woods on to the beach, where the Indians lie in wait, and shoot them. Their canoes are made from large trees, hollowed out, resembling those of the Chinooks, but larger. Every chief keeps an Indian on his establishment for making and repairing canoes, and making masks for his religious representations: this man they call their carpenter. Their covering consists of blankets except on state occasions; then the chiefs have splendid dresses of prepared elk-skins, ornamented with porcupine quills, dyed in various colours produced from boiled roots.

Mr. Peter Skein Ogden was the man who established the first fort amongst these northern tribes—who pitched his tent on a spot where white man never did before, and succeeded in bringing these savages into contact with the white man's customs—detached them from the profligacy of American trading to the useful and civilising intercourse with British merchants. He is descended from a most respectable and wealthy family in Montreal.

He was educated for the law; but preferred enlisting in the Northwest Company and passing his days in the wilds of America; where he has been almost from his youth. He is a man of great natural talent, humour, goodnature, and intelligence. He will entertain a host of friends by his amusing anecdotes. I should very much like to see issued from the press the "Memoirs of the eccentric Peter Skein Ogden," which would be amusing both to young and old—learned and unlearned.

Queen Charlotte's Island is about one hundred and fifty miles long. The principal tribes upon it are the Sketigets, Massets, and Comshewars. These are numerous; and have several half-breed Americans amongst them. They are expert thieves; and will, if constant watch is not kept, when visiting the vessels, draw bolts, staples, nails, and other articles of iron, from the doors. Lead is a fancy article of theirs; sometimes they will endeavour to cut it off the stem of a vessel. The only thing that keeps these, as well as the other northern tribes, in a little subjection, is the nine or twelve pound cannons staring them in the face. A great number of these Indians speak broken English. This island, as well as numerous other places, has never been examined; but samples of lead have been given by the Indians to some of the Company's servants. There are various minerals found here; but it would require a large party of men to examine this island, as the Indians are treacherous and sly. A soft kind of stone is found, resembling slate, which the Indians make into pipes, ornamented with various figures cut upon them resembling men and animals. From the flat file they make beautiful fluted daggers; some eighteen inches long, as highly finished as if they had been turned out of a first-rate maker's hands in London. They likewise make hats from white roots of trees, neatly platted together, made into any shape. Their dress is not very dissimilar from that of the Tongarse tribe.

When a vessel visits these tribes, which is seldom, as fur is rather scarce (particularly beaver), and as land and sea otter, with a few small furs, are the only skins they have, and these not plentiful, they will congregate, as near the vessel as possible, and dance—throwing themselves into different postures, and making all kinds of grimaces—having their faces highly painted; and down from the eagle completely covering their hair, with a kind of rattle in their hand, and a musical instrument resembling the tambourine. The dance is generally accompanied with a song. Their houses are neatly constructed, standing in a row; having large images, cut out of wood, resembling idols. The dwellings have all painted fronts, showing imitations of men and animals. Attached to their houses, most of them have large *potato* gardens: this vegetable was first given to them by an American captain; and is now grown in abundance, and traded by them to the vessels visiting their harbour, and to the traders at Fort Simpson. I have known from five to eight hundred bushels being traded in one season, from these Indians, at Fort Simpson.

In the latter end of the year of 1834, the Hudson's Bay Company lost, on Rose Point, at the entrance of this harbour, a fine schooner, of about one hundred tons, commanded by Captain Duncan; which drove upon the sands, on her beam ends. As it was found impossible to float her, and as the natives, who congregated in multitudes around Mr. Heath, the chief officer, and his men, while attempting to clear away the sand from her, were armed, and showed every disposition to pillage and murder, the crew quitted the wreck, at night, in the boats, and pulled for Fort Simpson. After several days of toil, and after some of the crew were frost-bitten, they, with hearts full of joy, reached the fort; not knowing, on their journey, but that rounding every point of land they might be cut off from a volley fired by the treacherous Indians. Captain Duncan thought some other vessel might be at the fort; if so, he determined again to return, to secure the vessel and the cargo. But, no vessel being at the fort, the lost schooner was left to the savages. We afterwards learnt that their plot was laid; and an attack was to have been made early the following morning. And in dividing the plunder amongst themselves, several quarrels originated, and numbers were killed.

The Hudson's Bay Company judiciously let the matter rest, without chastising the natives, and gave orders that no proceedings were to be taken against them, but to allow the trade to proceed as usual.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Relative claims of Great Britain and America to the Oregon Territory considered.

THIS subject has been already much discussed. A simple synopsis of the whole case may help to lead any right-minded, and dispassionate person to a just conclusion which of the contending claimants has the best right.

It is universally allowed that the right of any state to the jurisdiction over a new country rests on three grounds;—1st, prior discovery; 2d, the taking formal possession after discovery; 3d, settlement; this ground being strengthened if the formal possession be continued by settlement. There is a corollary often appended to these, i. e., contiguity of territory.

Now I think it will appear, to any sober mind, that, on each, and all of these grounds, the British claim is unquestionable. 1st, As to discovery. I shall mention only the chief navigators and explorers, avoiding all questionable and unimportant statements.

In 1777, before the Americans had any existence as a nation, Cooke, the Englishman, carefully explored the coast, as far as the forty-eighth degree: examined Nootka Sound; and then proceeded on his tour of survey northward to the Arctic Ocean, until he ascertained that the continents of Asia and America were separated by a strait. This strait Beehring subsequently passed, not knowing, as Cooke did, its character and geographical relations. However, most unjustly, the strait has been named after Beehring.

In 1787, Berkeley, the well known English navigator, explored the Strait of Fuca.

In the same year, Dixon, an Englishman, explored Queen Charlotte's Island, calling it after his own ship's name.

In 1788, Lieutenant Mears, R. N., who had long been engaged in the British trade in China, and was well conversant with the multitudinous branches of the Pacific intersecting this part of the coast, took an accurate survey of the Strait of Fuca and Nootka Sound; taking formal possession of the circumjacent territory in his Britannic Majesty's name; and established a factory, or trading post, at Nootka Sound.

In 1792, 1793, and 1794, the celebrated English navigator Vancouver, being sent out by government, explored surveyed, and sounded the Strait of Fuca, to the head of Puget's Sound, and every mile of all the intricate windings of this coast. It may be said, without exaggeration, that, in the world, there is not to be found a more extensive and complex system of internal navigation. The labyrinth of bays, sounds, inlets, creeks, and harbours,—promontories, islands, and land tongues, with the countless sinuosities of land and water, show it to be a perfect network.

In 1792, Broughton, Vancouver's lieutenant, commanding another ship, explored the Columbia River, as far as one hundred miles upwards, *taking possession* (and in his sovereign's name) of the whole coast, as British territory; and gave their present name to several places.

In 1811, Thompson, a scientific member of the Canadian Northwest Company, explored and surveyed the whole, from its source along its northern, which is its principal, branch, to its mouth.

When Mears, in 1788, established his factory in Nootka Sound, and laid the foundation of a very extensive British trade along the coast, Spain, having many previous causes of jealousy against Great Britain, took this opportunity of evincing a hostile spirit; and despatched Admiral Martinez to seize on the property of the settlers, and dispossess them. The British government took fire—demanded, and received satisfaction for this invasion of British rights, in a country to which Great Britain averred she had as strong a claim as Spain: and, in truth, a stronger claim, so far as exploration and possession went. The consequence was, that a treaty—known as "the Convention of the Escurial," was signed between the two parties, in 1790: the principal provisions of which were—that the subjects of either state should not be molested in fishing, or in landing for the purpose of trading with the natives, or of establishing settlements, in places not already occupied. And, by the fifth clause, it was agreed, that "the subjects of either state should have free access to the settlements then made, or thereafter to be made by the other." This treaty, which was laid before parliament by Mr. Pitt, was censured, as limiting the British right of settlement. The fifth clause was the special subject for attack by the opposition; who contended that, under it a British settlement was liable to interruption and invasion every moment, at the caprice or interest of the adverse party. Mr. Grey (the present Earl Grey) said, "In every place in which we might settle, access was left for the Spaniards. Where we may form a settlement on one hill, they may erect a fort on another. A British merchant must run all the *risk of discovery*, and all the expenses of establishment, for a property which was liable to be the subject of continual dispute, and which could never be placed on a permanent and stable footing." Had this sagacious statesman foreseen the present state of the Oregon question he could not have spoken more correctly; and, if we substitute *Americans* for *Spaniards*, his description will hold good.

Now, let it be recollected, that by this convention in 1790, the rights of Spain and Great Britain became perfectly equalized, and all differences, as to priority of discovery and right of colonization, were completely settled. Be it observed, that no other state had, or ever pretended to have, any right whatever to possession in those countries. The discoveries, made by Russia in the more northern latitudes cannot be made an exception, because they never did, nor could interfere with the terms of the convention.

Great Britain, then, stands merely on her primitive rights of discovery, of possession, and settlement. And those rights she has, without one hint of concession, maintained up to the present hour. Since 1790 she has made no new claim of settlement, and for the best reason, because her claim was as strong as justice could make it.

In 1807, the pretensions of the Americans to the Oregon became the subject of diplomacy between the two governments. But nothing definite was done. In 1814, pending the treaty of Ghent, the subject was renewed, and it was then agreed on that "the places seized on by either party should be restored." Now nothing was to be restored but the bare walls of Astoria (the American settlement before described), for the proprietor had already sold his effects to the British Northwest Company. This shell of an insignificant fort they never afterwards occupied. In 1818 the subject was renewed. And then it was agreed, that the country west of the Rocky Mountains should be open to both powers for ten years, without prejudice to their respective claim. In 1827 the former covenant was confirmed, with the additional stipulation, that either

In 1793, M'Kenzie was, in his inland explorations, nobly co-operating with Vancouver, in furthering the object of Great Britain. Perhaps, in the whole history of inland discovery, there is nothing to surpass M'Kenzie's amazing perseverance, courage, and sagacity. At a time when most of the northwest continent was totally unknown, and considered impassable, from the dreariness of the country, the destructive rigour of the climate, and the ferocity of the natives, he, a humble officer in the Hudson's Bay Company, conceived the daring project of traversing the whole continent, from ocean to ocean; and not only conceived, but—executed it! Having crossed the Rocky Mountains—whose existence was not before ascertained by civilized men, he descended part of the Tacoutche Tasse river and reached the Pacific, in latitude 52° 3'.

The other early explorers were the Spaniards—the principal of whom was Heceta. In 1775, he discovered the Columbia. In a Spanish map, printed a few years after, the mouth of the river is called Entreda de Heceta, and Entreda di Assuncion; and the river itself, Rio di San Roque: because he explored the lower parts of it on the fifteenth and sixteenth of August; which are the festivals of the Assumption, and of St. Roch.

Now as to the American discovery. Here is the history of it, as given by Washington Irving; who puts the very best face on the matter for his countrymen: "Among the American ships which traded along the northwest coast, in 1792, was the Columbia, Captain Gray, of Boston. In the course of her voyage, she discovered the mouth of a large river, in latitude 46° 19' north. Entering it, with some difficulty, on account of sand-bars, and breakers, she came to anchor in a spacious bay.... Captain Gray did not ascend the river farther than the bay in question, which still bears his name. After putting to sea, he fell in with the celebrated discoverer, Vancouver, furnishing him with a chart, which he made of the river. Vancouver visited the river; and his lieutenant, Broughton, explored it by the aid of Captain Gray's chart; ascending it upwards of one hundred miles, until within view of a snowy mountain, to which he gave the name of Mount Hood, which it still retains. The existence of this river was *known long before the visits of Gray and Vancouver*; but the information concerning it was vague and indefinite; being gathered from the reports of *Indians*. It was spoken of, by travellers, as the Oregon, and as the great river of the west."

Here it may be observed—1st, that one of the especial objects of Vancouver's mission was to explore this river—which was well known to the English; and which England, by previous treaty with Spain, had as good a right to settle on, as she had on the Thames, or Humber: the knowledge was not at all vague, but definite enough. *Nor* was this knowledge gathered from the reports of the Indians, but from the published accounts, and maps, of Heceta's discovery.—2d, that Gray was only a *private* speculating trader, dodging along that coast, bartering for furs.—3d, that he never passed farther up than twelve miles, as he himself says.—4th, that his object was not to explore or occupy.—5th, that he *did not* explore; for he remained in the river not more than ten days; and, during this time, was weatherbound in the bay, where he took refuge; and as to his chart, Vancouver, with a quiet sneer, says, "it was not much what it professed to be;" and as to *taking possession*, this poor coaster never did it, or thought of it.

In 1805-6, after, not merely the existence of the river, but its general course, and the adjacent localities, were well known to, and occupied by, British subjects, engaged in the fur trade, two American citizens, Lewis and Clarke, who had travelled overland across the Rocky Mountains, nearly on the parallel of the mouth of the Columbia, reached, by means of the southern branch, the parts of it already known. Their declared object was "to search for a water communication for the purposes of commerce."

party was at liberty to annul it, on giving the other twelve months' notice.

In a few months after the treaty of 1818, the Federal government concluded a treaty with Spain, called the "Florida Treaty;" by which Spain ceded to these States all her claims and pretensions to territory north of the forty-second degree of latitude, by a line drawn from the sources of the Arkansas to the Pacific.

It is on this cession of territorial right on the part of Spain that America partly rests her *sole* right to the territory of Oregon. But this assertion of right is, on the very face of it, absurd and untenable. Spain could not transfer what she did not then possess. Spain never had *exclusive* possession of the country, and even if she had, she surrendered it, by "the convention of the Escurial." in 1790. After that she had no more than a right of joint occupancy with Great Britain. But they assume another ground of right, *i. e.*, the discovery of the Columbia by Gray. This ground is as untenable as the other, and almost inconsistent with it. If the American right be sufficiently strong (as it is not) when founded on the cession by Spain, why resort to another ground?—the priority of discovery, settlement, &c. Now, this alleged discovery did not take place till *two years after* the treaty of 1790. And for *twenty-six* years after this alleged discovery they did not set up such a claim of *exclusive* right. For they only contended, in 1814 and 1818, that their claim was *as good* as that of Great Britain. Besides, Gray was *not* the discoverer of this river.

After the government of the United States had concluded the Florida treaty with Spain, it entirely altered its tone with respect to the Oregon country; and when the negotiations were next renewed, in 1827, between it and the government of Great Britain, it pushed its pretensions to the boldest lengths. It then claimed, through its plenipotentiary—Mr. Gallatin, from the 42d to the 49th degree of latitude, without reserve.

With respect to the discovery of the Columbia, it has been already shown, that the first *discoverer* was not Gray, but Heceta; and the first *explorer* was not Gray, but Broughton.

As to the surrender of all the rights of Spain to America by the Florida treaty, the plain answer is, that Spain only *did*, and only *could*, surrender what she herself enjoyed after the convention of 1790, *i. e.*, the right of joint trading and occupancy with Great Britain. An exclusive right she never had. And though a war broke out between the two countries subsequently to 1790, yet in the treaty of peace, afterwards signed, Spain did not rescind, or even propose to rescind, the covenant of 1790, which was of a fixed and permanent character.

As to the surrender of Astoria, it ought to be noticed, that the Americans showed some "sharp practice." All the property of Astoria was sold to the Northwest Company, by its proprietor, who anticipated the coming storm, and sold *before* the formal seizure of the fort by Captain Black, of the British war sloop, the Racoon. The treaty stipulated that "all the possessions taken by either party, during or after the war, should be restored." Strictly speaking, there was nothing, except a denuded post, to be restored to the Americans, for there was no property lost. The fort was, however, restored, but it has not since been occupied by the Americans, which shows their surrender of the ground of occupancy. It is now used by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Lord Castlereagh, writing on the 4th of February, 1818, on this subject, to the British Minister at Washington, says, "In signifying to Mr. Adams the full acquiescence of your government in the re-occupation of the *limited* position (*i. e.*, Astoria) which the United States held in that river (the Columbia) at the breaking out of the war, you will, at the same time, *assert* the *claim* of Great Britain to *that* territory, upon which the American settlement must be considered as an *encroachment*." He also says, that the British government "are not prepared to admit the validity of the title of the United States to this settlement." Lord Bathurst, in his despatch to the Northwest Company on this subject, says, "without, however, admitting the right of that government (the United States government) to the possession in question." Could language more pointedly convey the opinion of the British government, that the Americans had not a shadow of title to the country, than these despatches? The simple truth is, that it was not thought worth while to keep up a contention about a paltry post. It was surrendered. But the surrender was accompanied by many protests, that it should not be tortured into any recognition of a right of occupation on the part of America. On the contrary, the settlement was declared to be an *encroachment* on British rights, in despatches *publicly* addressed by British ministers to public servants, and public companies.

As to contiguity of territory.—The American territory is not more contiguous to the Oregon than the British is. In fact, it is less contiguous, for the undisputed possessions of Great Britain in North America are absolutely dovetailed into that country, so much so, that if, by any fatuity or criminality of British statesmanship, the country were to be surrendered to the avarice of the Americans, it would be almost impossible to strike a line of boundary. But the case is very different as to the frontiers of the United States. There nature has erected a wide and lofty barrier. After you pass the western limits of the States, there is, for many weeks' journey, a vast arid wilderness, yielding no sustenance for even wild man, or wild beast. Then, after that, there rises to the clouds, and above them, the appalling range of the Rocky Mountains, towering, sometimes, to the height of eighteen thousand feet, capped with eternal snow. Then again, these being crossed, the traveller has to pass over hundreds of miles, through crags, defiles, and deserts, before he approaches the valley of Columbia. This is contiguity of territory! In the same way may the Pacha of Egypt claim the land of the Niger as an appendage to the land of the Nile.

The object of the Americans is to have the dominion of the whole continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and to exclude all Europeans, especially British subjects, from all habitation there. This they do not disguise: indeed, they are every day growing bolder, and more exclusive in their tone.

The forty-ninth degree of latitude was the extremest northern limit that the Americans ever set, formerly (even in 1827), to their claim, in their boldest assumption of right. But now they have transcended all their former pretensions by many degrees; for they claim as far north as the fifty-fourth degree! The President, in his formal message to Congress, on the 5th of December, 1843, says: "The United States have *always* contended that their rights appertained to the whole region of country lying on the Pacific, and embraced within 49° and 54° 40′ of north latitude."

Commentary on so false and monstrous an assertion as this is thoroughly useless. If concession be made to this claim, they will, by and by, claim as far as the Pole. In a word, nothing will satisfy them, short of the extinction of British power and influence throughout the northern continent of America. And it only remains for the British government, and the British people, to consider whether they will tolerate this.

CHAPTER XIX.

Flatheads—Blackfeet—Snakes—Piutes—Strange probationary rites.

The Flatheads are, comparatively, very fair in complexion, and remarkably well made and active; with oval faces, and a mild, and playful expression of countenance. They are described, by those who have the best opportunities of knowing them collectively, as well as individually, as moral and honest in all their dealings—brave in the field—amenable to their chiefs—fond of cleanliness, and decided enemies to theft and falsehood of every description. They are also free from backbiting and laziness, which are so common among other tribes. The women are dutiful and affectionate wives and mothers; and conjugal infidelity is scarcely known amongst them. The dress of the men and women resembles that of other tribes living in rude comfort.

The principal chief of the tribe is hereditary; but, from their constant wars, they have adopted the salutary custom of electing, as their leader in battle, that warrior in whom is combined the greatest portion of wisdom, strength, and bravery. The election takes place annually; and, after the expiration of his period of military chieftainship, the leader sinks into his original position, unless he be re-elected. When at home, this leader has no authority whatever; but is as equally subject as any other warrior to the power of the *hereditary* chief. But when the warriors set out on their hunting excursions to the plains, he assumes the chief command, which he exercises with absolute sway till their return. On their advance towards an enemy, he always takes the lead; and on their return, or retreat, he brings up the rear. His post is one of the greatest danger, as well as of responsibility and power. He carries a long whip with a thick handle, which is decorated with scalps of those whom he himself slew, and with feathers; and he generally appoints two active warriors as his subalterns, or *aides-de-camp*. Great regularity is observed during the march; and if any warrior fall out of the ranks, or be guilty of any breach of discipline, he always acts with strict justice and impartiality; and punishes one of his own officers, if guilty of any disobedience or irregularity, with as much severity as any other offender. Hence, as well as from a sense of public expediency and duty, his authority is patiently obeyed. After the conclusion of the campaign, and on their arriving at their own home, the hereditary chief convenes a public meeting, and they proceed to a new election. There is no canvassing or intriguing; and if the last leader be superseded, he submits without a murmur.

They rarely marry out of their own nation; and will not easily consent that any of their women should become the wife of a white man. Their marriages are contracted only with the consent of the bride's parents or natural guardians, to whom presents are made by the bridegroom. He, too, in return, receives presents. This custom prevails among most of the tribes west of the Rocky Mountains. On the marriage-day, there is a meeting of mutual friends at the lodge of the bride's father, or next relation, who acts as her guardian; and they smoke the pipe of peace and friendship. Here the bride receives a lecture as to her future duties as a wife and mother. She is exhorted to be chaste, discreet, industrious, and silent; and when absent, with her husband, among other tribes, always to stay at home, and have no intercourse with strange Indians. She then retires with the old women to an adjoining hut, where she undergoes ablution; and is decked out in her bridal finery. She is then led back to her father's, or guardian's lodge—is complimented, and receives another lecture of advice. After this, a procession is formed to conduct the couple to their own lodge: the men, conducting the bridegroom, move on first, bearing flambeaux of cedar, in a slow and solemn pace, singing war-songs in praise of the bridegroom's bravery, and of their own victories over their enemies—especially the Blackfeet. The bride follows at a short distance, surrounded by a group of women, old and young; some of whom are rejoicing at the prospect of happiness before her; others—especially her young companions—crying, at the prospect of losing her unrestrained society thenceforward. When the whole party arrive at the door of the young couple's lodge, they form a circle, and commence dancing and singing for about twenty minutes. After this, the pipe of peace goes round; the company offer many prayers for the future welfare of the bridal pair; and depart.

The country of the Flatheads presents a pleasing diversity of woods and plains—valleys and mountains—lakes and rivers; and is well stocked with deer, mountain-sheep, beavers, otters, martens, wolves, lynxes, &c., wild-fowl and fish, besides esculent roots; so that they have abundant means of subsistence and clothing; and of traffic as well.

The Flatheads are polite and unobtrusive. When one speaks, the rest pay attention; and every one very quietly gives his reasons for assenting, or dissenting, from any proposition. Even the children are more peaceable than other children; and though hundreds of them may be seen together at play, there is no quarrelling among them.

There is among them a strong devotional feeling, which is much encouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company. Sunday is inviolably kept sacred by them. They will not raise their camp on that day; neither will they hunt, fish, trade, or perform any kind of labour, except in cases of extreme danger on that day: they also spend a part of it in prayer and religious ceremonies. The chief, who is at the same time, generally, priest, assembles the community, and commences a form of prayer, in which they all join in an occasional chaunt, or chorus. He then exhorts them to good conduct—to be diligent in providing for their families—to abstain from lying and stealing—to avoid quarrelling, or cheating in their play; and to be just and hospitable to all strangers. During this time of worship, all business in the camp is suspended: and if an Indian is riding by, he dismounts; holds his horse, and attends with devotion till all is over. At the conclusion, the priest says, "I have done;" to which they all respond aloud. They have also their prayers on week-days, in the morning or evening. Sometimes on an evening, the chief, or priest, delivers these prayers and exhortations on horseback, moving slowly about the camp.

This devotional feeling, and respect for morality, prevails among the Nez Perces also, and other tribes in the midland region. And it may be affirmed, that there are many leading points of similarity between the Flatheads and these tribes. They afford an ample and excellent field for the labours of zealous and judicious missionaries; who would have but little difficulty in converting them to Christianity—the morality and benevolence of which they already, to some extent, practise; and for the reception of which they are already, in a great measure, prepared. But then the missionaries should be men who would enforce the truth and usefulness of their preaching by the purity of their lives; for as they themselves generally practise what their preachers inculcate, they would at once keenly notice any discrepancy between doctrine and conduct.

They believe in the existence of a good and evil spirit; and in a future state of rewards and punishments. They believe, that after death the good will go to a country where there is perpetual summer; and delightful rivers and plains, abounding in fish, buffalo, and all kinds of game—that they will there meet their parents, wives, children, and other relations and friends—and will there spend their time in hunting, fishing, and amusement; free from the terrors of war, or the apprehensions of cold, or famine. But the bad, they believe, will be consigned to regions of eternal snow; where they will be shivering with cold, and sinking with thirst and hunger—beholding, at a distance, fires, which they cannot approach—water, which they cannot touch—and herds of deer and buffalo, which they cannot kill: in a word, tantalized with the sight of all the good things of life, which they must not use. They think the boundary between the dreary *Tartarus* occupied by the wicked, and the *Elysian* fields of the good, is a jungle full of panthers, wolves, and all other noxious and dangerous animals. However, they imagine that this place of punishment is rather a *purgatory* than a *hell*; and that according to the different degrees of the crimes of the wicked, they will sooner or later be emancipated; and when their offences are expiated, be permitted to join their former friends, in the happy regions of the good.

Their code of morality is very simple, and comprehensive. They say that honesty—bravery—truth—dutiful submission to their parents—obedience to their chiefs—and affection for their wives, children, and families, are the virtues which entitle them to a place of happiness hereafter; whereas the opposite vices condemn them to a place of misery.

They have also some idea of a fallen state. They have a traditionary belief that beavers are a fallen race of Indians; who disobliged the Good Spirit, and were therefore condemned to their present shape—but that in due time they will be restored to their humanity. They allege that beavers have certain powers of speech; and that they have heard them talk with each other—holding council; and sentencing offending members to punishment. These notions about beavers are held by several other Indian tribes.

The Blackfeet are a numerous tribe, and the best-looking of all the American Indians; who roam far and wide on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, and are generally represented by natives and American traders, as the sworn foes alike of white men and red. But though they are, unquestionably, a fierce race, yet I have spoken to many free hunters and trappers, as fierce and unscrupulous as themselves—men who would find no interest in undervaluing the perils of their own pursuit, and would not be disposed to soften down the character of these Indians—men who knew the Blackfeet well; and I have heard from them that they were not devils so black as they were painted. They obtained the character of ferocity; and they were therefore considered as fair human game, to be hunted down by the surrounding nations, whom they used to conquer in war; and by the Americans, against whose encroachments on Indian freedom and territory, they offered, and offer still, the most formidable stand. They are an austere and haughty race—occupy, generally, countries (as they spread their predatory and migratory rovings over a vast expanse, which abounds in all the means of subsistence) which bring them on the American confines, and which are worth preserving. They have, they say, heard of the Americans; who preached liberty, and proved it by shaking off the dominion of foreigners; but have shown how false are their pretensions and their professions of general freedom, when the first use they have made of the establishment of their own independence, even in a strange land, was to rob those whose independence in their own native land was never disputed since they were created by the Great Spirit.

They say, too, that these white men did not come to them originally in a candid guise—either as friends or enemies; but that, contrary to all the notions they entertained of truth and valour, they came to them as treacherous liars. They smoked with them the pipe of peace and fidelity—broke that pledge—and then hunted the red men, like wolves, from the plains and hills that were granted to their fathers from all time. These white men pretended to give them the great blessings which *their own spirit* gave them; but in place of this they gave them—not more meat, nor more fruits, nor more bread from roots, nor a better mode of making arrows, nor softer beds—but *burning water* (spirituous liquors) which the *Bad Spirit* made; and which made them mad; and not friends, but enemies, to each other. They also say, that those white men who come from the direction of the rising sun, (the United States Americans,) have endeavoured to make them enemies to the other white men, who come from other quarters. These, and a thousand other justifications for their hostility to the white men, especially the Americans, I have heard from those who have had opportunities of familiar converse with them.

Independently of these abstract reasons for their dislike of the *citizen* white men, as the wanton destroyers of the whole red race, the conduct of the individual specimens of the American character who creep in among them, would almost justify their antipathy.

A well-principled and high-minded American writer—Mr. Townsend, who made a journey through these regions with an American party, says, "This hostility is kept alive from year to year by incessant provocations on the part of the white hunters and traders, who are at best but *intruders* on the *rightful* domains of the red men of the wilderness. Many a night have I sat at the fireside, and listened to the recital of bloody and ferocious scenes, in which the narrators were the actors, and the poor Indians the victims. And I have felt my blood boil with indignation, to hear the diabolical acts applauded by those for whose amusement they were narrated;" (i. e., the company of the American free citizens who accompanied him in his route overland through the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia, or Oregon territory.) "Many a merciless marauder was made by these midnight tales of rapine and murder—many a stripling, in whose tender mind the seeds of virtue and honesty had never yet germinated, burned for an opportunity of loading his pack-horse with the beaver-skins of some solitary Black-foot trapper; who was to be murdered, and despoiled of the property he had acquired by months of toil and danger." The writer proceeds to point out a darker feature in the character of his countrymen—"those *noble* freemen (to use the words of a member of Congress) who are the pioneers to prepare the road of *civilization*, of *Christianity*, and of *our institutions*, to our territories on the banks of the Columbia." (!)—Says Mr. Townsend, in continuation of this subject, "Acts of this kind are by no means uncommon: and the subjects of this sort of atrocity are not always the poor Indians. White men themselves often fall *by the hands of their companions*, when by good fortune and industry they have succeeded in loading their horses with fur! The fortunate trapper is treacherously murdered by one who has eaten from the same dish, and drank from the same cup with him: and the assassin triumphantly returns to the camp with his ill-gotten property. If his companion be inquired for, the answer is, that some days ago they parted company: and he will probably soon join. . . . . . But he is soon forgotten; or perhaps only remembered by one, more steadfast than the rest, who seizes with avidity the first opportunity of murdering an unoffending Indian in revenge for the death of his friend."

The ferocity of the Blackfeet towards the white man has, however, latterly been much mitigated by intercourse with the traders and out-trapping parties of the Company. These act towards them with uniform civility, liberality, and justice, and go openly, and with known authority, and also under responsibility to the Company: not in the sneaking, thieving, bullying, and plundering character of the Americans, who can give little, and are disposed to give less, in the way of trade, but cheat and plunder as much as they can, and are not under any control. Mr. Townsend, speaking of a trapping party in the service of the Company, and under the command of Mr. M'Kay, consisting of thirty men, Indians, French Canadians, and half-breeds, observes, "I admire the order, decorum, and strict subordination which exists among his men, *so different from what I have been accustomed to see in parties composed of Americans* . . . . steady, determined perseverance, and bold measures, aided by a rigid self-example, made them as clay in his hand, and has finally reduced them to their present admirable condition." The Blackfeet appreciate this mode of dealing and intercourse, and in general reciprocate fairly enough, considering the short duration of time in which they have been brought to even a remote knowledge of principle of fair-dealing or humanity existing among the whites. In their own peculiar districts they will deal peaceably with the servants of the Company; but when they go abroad on "war-parties," or predatory excursions, they do not conceive themselves bound by any duty to act very scrupulously, and they will slay, or plunder, or trade, as their feelings or interest may lead them.

The Snakes, and other tribes, do the same. They think that, when confined within their own country, and when therefore in a state of peace, they are responsible for all their actions, and must disavow all outrage, and their country and nation are free from all imputation. But when they roam abroad into other countries, in their marauding expeditions, then they imagine that their own outrages must be considered as the legitimate duties of their calling and their necessities; and that any misdeeds of theirs ought to be saddled on the proper occupants of

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the invaded country. If a white man, for instance, is slain by the Blackfeet in the Snake country, they will justify themselves by the argument that he was an enemy, else why would the Snakes have him there? The Snakes, in a similar case, would make the same plea.

The Snake Indians, who embrace many tribes, inhabit a wide extent of country at the head of Snake River, above and below Fort Hall, and the vicinity of Great Bear River, and Great Salt Lake. They are a migratory race, and generally occupy the southeastern portion of the Oregon. Horses and dogs are their only domestic animals. Their clothing does not differ much from that of other inland Indians. The hair, which like that of the Blackfeet grows to an extraordinary length, is the only covering for the head; in general it is braided and twisted round the head, and, thus managed, forms a strong protection, not only against the weather, but against an offensive weapon—far better than cap or helmet. The females, for the most part, wear it hanging down the back in queues. Their lodges are of a conical shape, covered with skins. Their weapons are bows, arrows, and guns. Their general stock in trade consists of horses, the skins of deer, elks, buffaloes, beavers, otters, and fish. They are represented by most persons, as pacific and hospitable; especially those races within, or bordering on the Rocky Mountains. They have obtained credit from travellers and traders for hospitality, and honesty in all their dealings, and for possessing high notions of morality and self-restraint. Knowing the dangerous and degrading consequences of the use of spirituous liquors, they refrain from them, saying, that, though exciting for the moment, they eventually enfeeble them, and render them unfit for the purposes of hunting, and of defending themselves against their enemies—they make them quarrelsome to their wives and children, to whom they are bound to be kind, and induce them to fight amongst themselves, when they ought all to be united against the common enemy, and that their foe reduces the bravest and most crafty chief to the condition of the lowest Indian.

Though this general picture, given by some travellers and writers, holds good in the main, of the various tribes classed under the head of Snake Indians, and holds especially as in the fertile countries verging on the confines of the territories of the United States, and in those bordering on that of their enemies, yet there are many and drawbacks, as in the barren lands, within the Oregon territory, west of the Rocky Mountains; many of the tribes who live on fish are filthy in the extreme—ill clad, and selfish. Of the Kaguses, and Perces, who live farther west, in a better soil and under a more genial climate, and who have closer intercourse with the traders, such a picture holds better still. The Perces are in general, a very good-looking race, both men and women. But, of all the inland races, the Flatheads hold the first rank, in point of intelligence and civilisation, and social intercourse with the whites, and personal comfort.

Among the many singular narratives of his own adventures, and of the customs and superstitions of the remote inland tribes, narrated by Mr. Peter Skein Ogden, one of the chief factors, he mentions the following: "Among many of the warlike tribes of the Rocky Mountains there exists a remarkable custom of initiatory probation for the young men, in the arts of pillage and war. When arrived at the age judged fit for bearing arms, and being useful to the tribe, they assemble in bands, to the number of thirty or fifty, according to circumstances, in the spring; and taking formal leave of their relations and friends, depart to some secret place in the woodlands. There they erect a tent, with a number of poles, about thirty feet long each, planted in a circle in the ground, and brought to a point at the top. This they cover closely with boughs and leaves, so as to render the interior quite impenetrable to human observation from the outside. The entrance is by a closely-wattled door, equally impervious to human vision. This they make their temple. Inside, from the top of the conical roof, they hang a fresh buffalo-hide; and below it, round the sides, camp-kettles, and blankets: and some arms, as the necessary accompaniments in their expeditions—scalps, the emblems of victory—and the skin of a white buffalo (a most rare and precious animal),—as offerings to the *Great Spirit*. Then they commence the ceremony of invoking the aid of this spirit; and consecrating themselves to their future pursuits, and the general interest of their tribe. Their principal ceremonial is the smoking of the *mystic* pipe. The person appointed as priest first uses the pipe—exhaling the vapour through his nostrils—then touches the ground, and afterwards his limbs, with the lower part of the bowl, and hands the pipe round on the right hand, to the rest, who do the same. This rite ended, they offer a solemn supplication to the Great Spirit for success; and make a solemn vow, that if the evil one do not enter and enfeeble them, they will never again return to their relatives and tribe, except in garments stained with the blood of their enemies. After this, they dance to the music of a war-chaunt, until they become exhausted. They spend three days and nights in the performance of these rites, without eating or drinking. From the languor of body, and the high excitement of the imagination, produced during this time, their sleep must be broken, and visited with visions adapted to their views. They therefore imagine that the spirits of the brave dead, allowed to descend by the *Great* Spirit, visit them, and direct them in their future course of operations. On the morning of the fourth day, at dawn, they sally forth from their temple; each separately, and by a different route, to some *distant* spot which they had previously agreed on as a rendezvous; where they are to concert their future schemes of operation. After they quit the temple, hungry and feeble, they must provide, every man for himself, until they meet. If they are unable to fulfil the terms of their vow during the first season, from lack of an enemy, on whom to flesh their maiden weapons, they retire to winter-quarters to wait their opportunity. If no human game is on foot, they are obliged to resort to some ingenious mode of keeping the vow; for the quicker their return home, the higher their reputation. A solitary trapper, well known to the tribe to which a band of these disappointed noviciates belonged, once dropped in their way. They gave him hospitable cheer. But he soon discovered that they began angrily to debate among themselves as to the propriety of shedding his blood. One party contended, that, though he was the acquaintance of their fathers, yet he was a white man, and all white men were their natural enemies; and that though he ate with them, he did not give them hospitality; and besides, that, when they were disappointed in the wilderness, he was thrown into their way by the Great Spirit, in order to enable them to fulfil the terms of their vow, and to return to their homes and friends. Against this, it was maintained that the white men were not of necessity their natural enemies, for some of them did them good service;—that as this man was called brother and friend by their fathers, he ought to be so considered in reality;—that, as they invited him to eat, they pledged themselves to the same friendship towards him as was shown by their fathers;—that thus to lure him to destruction, was not the act of brave men, who expected reward from the Great Spirit, or approbation from their fathers;—that if he were at all thrown in their way by any supernatural agency, it was by that of the *Evil* one, who wished to tempt them, by a cowardly and dishonourable act, to exasperate the Great and Good Spirit in slaying a friend and brother. A compromise was at last effected between the parties, by taking his blood without taking his life. A sharp flint-lancet was applied to his veins, which gave blood enough to dye their garments: and thus they returned home with their vow fulfilled, at least to the letter; and the trapper returned to the mountains."

These temples are held sacred and inviolable. They are suffered to remain, with all their valuable offerings untouched, as memorials of piety; and it is death for any one to take from them a single article.

Within the Colorado and the Great Salt Lake, there dwells a tribe which is one of the most degraded of the whole human race, physically and mentally—*the Piutes*. They are entirely naked—men and women; and their only food is lizards, snails, and wild roots. When the snow falls heavily, and these means of subsistence fail them, for they are utterly improvident, they burrow holes in the sides of the sandhills, and there vegetate in a state of somnolent torpor till the opening of the season. Then they crawl abroad, "anatomies of death," to eke out their wretched living; and, until they acquire sufficient strength to forage at large, eat grass on their hands and knees like beasts. The trappers say, that after a severe season, the ground about their caverns may be seen covered with the bodies of famished dead. Their only weapons are clubs, and in the use of even these they are unskilful.

CHAPTER XX.

Fort Hall—Trappers—Buffalo—Shooting the rapids—Passage from the United States across the Rocky Mountains.

FORT HALL, one of the remotest stations, situated in the third section, on the southeast, near the Rocky Mountains, was built in 1832, by Captain Wyeth, an American, who first tried the speculation of a salmon fishery at the lower parts of the Columbia, and failed; he then tried a fur-trading speculation, and also failed, from want of skill, or capital, or liberality of dealing. The Company purchased this post from him on liberal terms; and the purchase to him was almost equivalent to a gratuity; as he had no means of otherwise disposing of his stock, and receiving any remuneration for his outlay. At this station, which commands a wide range of trading operations, clothing of every kind, provisions, and ammunition are supplied to the Indians and the free traders; as are also horses, accoutrements, and other necessaries, for that wild and desolate country. So liberal is the Company, and so strong is the mutual confidence between the parties, that the horses are given as a loan; and the other articles are sold on credit, and at a moderate charge, to be paid for when the skins are brought in, at the proper season; no security being given or required, except the honour of the recipients of the favours. So that if the hunters fail, from death, casualty, or dishonesty, to fulfil their share of the contract, the Company have no remedy. The Company, even in this way—on credit, sell their goods at one half of what the Americans charge; and pay much higher for the goods received than the Americans. This liberality of treatment, and the uniform justice of the Company, are so strongly contrasted with the conduct of the American merchants, that (to use the words of Mr. Farnham, who was hospitably entertained there after crossing the mountains), "even the American trappers are fast leaving the service of their countrymen, for the larger profits, and better treatment, of British employment." There is also a company of men connected with this fort, under the command of an American mountaineer, who, following various tribes in their migratory expeditions, in the adjacent Mexican and American domain, collect whatever fur may chance to be among them. By these means, and various others subsidiary to them, the gentleman in charge of the establishment collected, in the summer of 1839, more than thirty packs of the best beaver of the mountains.

Many stories are told at the fort of the strange adventures, and "hair breadth 'scapes" of the free mounted trappers. But it may be worth while to mention one, which Richardson, a Kentuckyman, long known to the servants of the Company as one of the most astute and *dare-devil* traders of the mountains, used to tell. It is his boast that he never carries provisions on the most dreary and distant journeys. His good horse, his trusty rifle, his pistols, and his knife; his steel flint, his traps, a coil of cord, a wallet, are his only accompaniments; and his only trust in Providence. Furnished with these, I have heard him say, he fears nothing, over river, or frozen lake, or mountain, or barren plain. Sometimes he attaches himself to a party; and sometimes forages and hunts alone. He was once out alone hunting buffaloes, and at the close of day was returning to his tent, when he heard a clattering of hoofs behind him, and, upon looking back, he observed three Blackfeet Indians, well mounted, in hot pursuit of him. He immediately threw off his cargo of meat to lighten his horse; and then urged onward the animal to his utmost speed, in hopes to outstrip his pursuers. But he discovered that the enemy was gaining rapidly upon him, and would soon have him at their mercy. He then adopted an expedient as singularly ingenious as it was desperately bold. Drawing his long scalping knife, he plunged it into his horse's neck, and at once severed the spine. The animal dropped instantly dead, and the determined hunter, throwing himself behind the fallen carcass, prepared to meet his pursuers. In a moment one of the Indians came within range of his rifle, and was shot through the heart. The other two, seeing the fate of their companion, halted for a moment, and then prepared to surround their enemy. But just as the first man had sent his ball whistling by the ear of Richardson, he himself dropped from his horse, by a ball from one of Richardson's long pistols. The third seeing this rather dangerous game to play, whipped his horse, and was soon out of sight. Richardson had then only to gather the fruits of his victory. He caught the two Indians' horses—mounted one—loaded the other with the discharged cargo of meat, and returned home with two spare rifles, and a good stock of ammunition.

The Indian wives of the Company's trappers can frequently hunt as well as their husbands—kill the elk and buffalo—trap the beaver, and use the rifle. Living so much in the open air, and leading so active a life, and generally so well fed, they are athletic and active. It is no uncommon occurrence to find them, on their lonely excursions with their husbands, or even when travelling with a party, give birth to an infant silently, and without assistance; and in an hour after they have recovered from the languor, tie up the infant—hoist it on their back, and proceed with their usual occupation.

The kind of lodges generally used by the mountain Indians while travelling, and by the trapping parties, are of a conical form, composed of ten long poles, the lower ends of which are pointed, and driven into the ground, the upper blunt, and drawn together by thongs. Above, and around these poles, several dressed buffalo-skins, sewed together, are stretched, a hole being left on one side for an entrance. They are comfortable and commodious; and in the erection of them, the Indian women, to whom the office is generally left, are singularly expert. A squaw, accustomed to the work, will erect and prepare one for the reception of her husband, while he is removing the burden from his horse. An expert Indian woman has been known to stretch a lodge in half the time required by four white men to erect another in the neighbourhood.

Having already quoted the best authority for conveying an idea of the conduct of the American traders and trappers, and of the contrast between them and those in the service of the Company—*i. e.*, American authority; I beg to introduce one quotation more. Mr. Townsend, speaking of Mr. M'Kay's party, already mentioned, in which there were thirteen Indians—Percés, Kayouse, and others—says: "After supper was concluded, we sat ourselves down on a buffalo-robe, at the entrance of the tent, to see the Indians at their evening devotions. The whole thirteen were soon collected, at the call of one whom they had chosen for their chief, and seated with sober, sedate countenances around a large fire. After remaining in perfect silence for, perhaps, fifteen minutes, the chief commenced a harangue in a solemn, impressive tone; reminding them of the object for which they were assembled—that of worshipping 'the Great Spirit, who made the light, and the darkness, the earth, and the water,'—and then assured them, that if they offered up their prayers to him with one tongue, they would certainly be accepted. He then rose from his squatting position to his knees, and his example was followed by all the others. In this situation he commenced a prayer, consisting of short sentences, uttered rapidly, but with great apparent fervour—his hands clasped on his breast, and his eyes cast upwards with a beseeching look towards heaven. At the conclusion of each sentence, a choral response of a few words was made, accompanied, frequently, by low moaning. The prayer lasted about twenty minutes. After its conclusion, the chief, still maintaining the same position of body and hands, but with his head bent to his breast, commenced a kind of psalm, or sacred song, in which the whole company joined. The song was a simple expression of a few sounds, no intelligible words being uttered. It resembled the words He-ha—Ho-ha—He-ha—commencing in a low tone, and gradually swelling to a full, round chorus. During the song, the clasped hands of the worshippers were moved rapidly across the breast, and their bodies swung with great energy to the time of the music. The chief ended the song he had commenced by a kind of swelling groan, which was echoed in chorus. It was then taken up by another, and the same routine was gone through. The whole ceremony occupied about an hour and a half. A short silence then succeeded, after which each Indian rose from the ground, and disappeared in the darkness, with a step as noiseless as that of a spectre. I think I was never more gratified by any exhibition in my life. The humble and beseeching looks of the untutored beings who were calling on their heavenly Father to forgive their sins, and continue his mercies, and the evident heartfelt sincerity which characterized the whole scene, were truly affecting and impressive." He then proceeds to say, that, "The next day, being the Sabbath, our good missionary, Mr. Jason Lee (he was a Methodist, and belonged to the writer's American party), was requested to hold a meeting, with which he obligingly complied. The *greater part* of our men, as well as the *whole* of Mr. M'Kay's party, including the Indians, attended. The people were remarkably quiet and attentive; and the Indians sat on the ground like statues. Although not one of them could understand a word that was spoken, they nevertheless maintained the most strict and decorous silence, kneeling when the preacher kneeled, and rising when *he rose*. . . . Mr. Lee is a great favourite with the men, deservedly so, and there are, probably, few persons to whose preaching *they would have listened with so much complacence.* I have often been amused and pleased by Mr. Lee's manner of reproving them *for* the coarseness, and *profanity*, of expression, which is so *universal* among them."

Let the reader contrast this account of Mr. M'Kay's party, including the Indians, with the following description, given six pages further, of an American debauch; bearing in mind that the Company's men are not allowed the use of spirits. "At sunrise the '*star-spangled banner*' was raised on the flag-staff. All in the camp were allowed the free use of liquor; and, as usual, the consequence was a scene of rioting, noise, and fighting during the whole day. Some became so drunk that their senses fled them entirely; and they were, therefore, harmless; but by far the greater number were sufficiently under the influence of the vile trash, to render them in their conduct disgusting and tiger-like. We had *gouging, biting, fisticuffing*, and stamping, in the most *scientific* perfection. Some even fired guns and pistols at each other. Such scenes I hope never to witness again; they are absolutely sickening; and cause us to look on our countrymen with loathing."

The Buffalo, or wild American ox, which formerly abounded in most parts of North America, is every day becoming scarcer, in proportion as civilisation and cultivation advance. It was found throughout the whole range now occupied by the United States, with the exception of that part which lies east of Hudson's River and Lake Champlain, and of narrow and swampy strips of coast on the Atlantic Gulf of Mexico. The fineness of the buffalo wool, which within a few years has caused it to become an object of commerce, for the manufacture of hats and stuffs, is mentioned by Morton, a *New England* settler, in 1637. He says, "their fleeces are very useful, being a kind of wolle, as fine almost as the wolle of the beaver." At present they are seldom seen east of the Mississippi, and south of the St. Lawrence. But they are found in considerable numbers west of the Rocky Mountains, in the Columbian region, nearly to the borders of California, and west of Lake Winipeg, up to the sixty-third degree. Their general colour is dun; sometimes they are spotted. The frame of the buffalo is larger than that of the generality of domestic cattle; and, though the fore parts are uncouth, the hind parts are handsomely, and rather delicately formed. It looks very formidable, from its huge shoulder hump, its flowing wiry mane, and sweeping beard, and thick horns, curved backwards.

A herd of buffaloes, when pursued, especially if there be a great number of bulls, emits a strong odour of musk, which is left in their wake; and their feet make a loud crackling noise. Their sense of smell is very acute. Sometimes they will scent a man, if to the windward of them, at the distance of two or three miles; and then they will gallop away with the greatest speed. When they cannot scent a man, they will hear his near approach, or advance themselves very near him, without any shyness. Whether this is to be attributed to the imperfect vision of the animal, whose eyes are obscured by the great quantity of hair which covers his face, or not, it is not easy to determine. Though buffaloes and elks are seen on the same prairies, they do not herd together. Wolves commonly attend them; and neither seem to molest the other. It is almost impossible to kill this animal by shooting it through the head or chest: the head is so protected by a matting of coarse wiry hair, that a ball becomes entangled in it before reaching the bone; and the chest is so fenced by a bulwark of bone, that it will require many bullets to penetrate it. Accordingly, the hunters contrive to gallop by the side of the animal, and shoot it, with bullet or arrow, behind the shoulder-blade.

They sometimes congregate in such myriads, on the prairies west of the Rocky Mountains, that the whole circle of vision within the bounds of the horizon presents one dark mass of these animals. The bulls march at the head of the cows; and it is then dangerous to encounter them: for if they become enraged or frightened, the whole herd start off in a straight line, and in close order, regardless of all obstacles; and would crush to pieces men, horses, and wagons, if in their way. Some of these bulls weigh three thousand pounds each. When there is abundance of this sort of game, the hunters often content themselves with the choice parts—the tongue—the slices by the hump ribs—and the marrow; the carcass being left to the wolves. This waste often leads to woful want. When this animal is hunted, he becomes sometimes bewildered, and exasperated; and turns round on his pursuers: then it is inevitable death to come within range of his horns.

Shooting the rapids.—When a boat enters the rapids of the Columbia, the bowman and the steersman quickly resign their oars, and grasp short canoe-paddles, which they hold down edgewise, by the boat's sides, propping themselves, at the same time, against her gunwale, to steady her; while the rowers, in the middle, ply their oars most vigorously: and then the boat sweeps onward—rising, or ducking, or spinning about, according as she is borne by the current or the eddies; to the great terror of those who, for the first time, are thus whirled along. The success of such a perilous adventure mainly depends on the steadiness and skill of the two guides, at the stem and stern—the efforts of the middle men being, mainly, to keep the boat buoyant. The contrast between the Canadian voyageurs and the Indians, in performing this feat, is remarkable and characteristic: those merrily chaunt their boat-song; but these are as silent and stern as death.

Passage from the States through the Rocky Mountains.—Though several parties have penetrated into the Oregon Territory from the United States, through the gorges, and over the towering heights, of the Rocky Mountains, yet it may be safely asserted, from the concurrent testimony of traders, trappers, and settlers, who have themselves passed these natural barriers, that the difficulties are so numerous and formidable, and the time necessary for the passage so long, that there is no secure, expeditious, or commodious track, which can be ever used as a highway, so as to afford facilities for an influx of emigrants over-land. Several routes have been tried of late; and each differs only from the other in the privations which the passengers undergo. None but the wild and fearless free-trappers can clamber over those precipices, and tread these deserts with security; and even these are quitting them as haunts, and now using them only as unavoidable tracks. It is true, there have been published more favourable accounts within the last year or two by parties who have made the journey safely, and who encourage others to make a similar experiment. But these accounts are in such a spirit of *bravado*, and accompanied with expressions of thankfulness by the parties for their own success, that they are indirect proofs of the difficulty and danger of the undertaking, and of the utter hopelessness of such a route for general purposes. For hundreds of miles, the several tracks present nothing but frightful barrenness under-foot, and overhead, scorching heat, or piercing cold. The country, even west of the Rocky Mountains, is broken with towering cliffs, deep ravines, and sunken streams, from which the traveller cannot draw a drop to allay his burning thirst; and the soil is either sandy, in which he sinks at every step; or of a black, rugged stone, which tears his feet. The travellers have been obliged to feed on the lean carcasses of their animals, which have died from hunger, thirst, or fatigue. Farnham says, that his party were at last obliged to kill their universal favourite and pet—their dog; and economize his flesh. He further says, that during eight days' journey—and he had proceeded with the expedition of one travelling for life—he had not met with a single acre of land capable of producing grain or vegetables.

Another American traveller—Townsend, says: "Our only food was the dried, crumbling, meat which we carried; and chewed like biscuits as we travelled. There are two reasons by which the extreme thirst which the wayfarer suffers, in these regions, may be accounted for—first, the intense heat of the sun, upon the open and exposed plains; and secondly, the desiccation to which every thing here is subject. The air feels like the breath of a sirroco; the tongue becomes parched and horny; and the eyes, mouth, and nose are incessantly assailed by the fine, pulverized lava, which rises from the ground with the least breath of air. Bullets, pebbles of chalcedony, and pieces of smooth obsidian, were in great requisition: almost every man was mumbling some of these substances, in an endeavour to assuage his burning thirst." The lead bullets, and the other substances which they chewed were for the purpose of producing spittle, which they would swallow to prevent inflammation and death.

There are, however, certain declinations called *gaps* through which (though with great labour), a tedious, and dreary passage can be effected. The most frequent of these is the most northern, between Mounts Brown and Hooker, through which the Company's servants pass in their journey from Columbia to Hudson's Bay. This is, comparatively, an easy passage. There is another between the head-waters of the Flathead and Marias Rivers.

Another between Lewis and Clarke's River, in the Oregon, and the sources of the Missouri. And another, which is very important, lies between Long's Mountains, and the Wind River cluster.

CHAPTER XXI.

Missionaries.

HAVING already, in various parts of this work, when describing the customs of the natives, prepared the reader for forming a judgment of the religious tendencies of their minds; and shown their aptitude for the reception of Christian truth, I beg to offer a few remarks on the culpable neglect of the mental, moral, and religious culture evinced by the missionary societies of Great Britain, and by successive governments, towards those people who are, in truth, *de facto*, however questionable it may be that they are *de jure*, subjects of the British crown.

The Hudson's Bay Company, it cannot be doubted, exercises almost absolute sway over the whole of the northwest of America, and, it may be averred, also over the Oregon country. Their power is the only civilized power known to the Indians which they show any disposition to yield to, or even respect. Independently of the vast and complex machinery of internal and coasting commerce, which they have set to work throughout those almost boundless tracts—a machinery reduced to the most perfect and unerring regularity—and independently of the sway which their numerous servants, scattered far and wide, and intermingling with the natives, can give the Company—the strict honesty of their dealings (for they are now become too powerful and too wealthy to be placed under any necessity of practising either fraud or oppression to carry on their trade, and too humane and prudent to resort to these vile American expedients), and their humane endeavours to lift, as far as lies within their individual scope, the natives from their prostration and ignorance to the rank of Christianized and civilized men—endeavours which the natives are sagacious enough to perceive, and honest enough to acknowledge (speaking generally), have struck the roots of their power deep into the hearts of the aborigines.

The Russians and the Americans are the only two nations that come, even remotely, in contact with the British in those countries; and both are equally powerless and uninfluential with the natives. The Russians, for the most part, confine themselves to their own territory—a strip of sea coast, beyond the 54° of north latitude. Even here thy can hardly be said to exercise direct *power*, or even to have much *influence*. They have posts, it is true, stationed there; one especially at Sitcka, in the Kamtschatka country—a large one, which is worthy of some notice, and to which the Hudson's Bay Company, by a commercial contract, entered into lately, supply provisions. They, however, are barely traders; carrying off the products of the country, without taking much interest in the condition of the natives: neither caring for them, or cared for by them. The Americans hold a position inferior still; for they have not one inch of land from California to the Pole—from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, to which they have undisputed right; and not one single trading post or station along that immeasurable range of coast and country. They do trade, it is true, as well as they can, throughout this vast expanse. But then, from their principles of conducting trade, and the domineering disposition evinced by their irresponsible traders, they have lost all hold of the respect and confidence of the natives. It may be, therefore, averred, without any chance of effective contradiction, that while the British possess substantial and enduring *power*, through the agency of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Americans have, not to say a shadow of *power*, but they have not even *influence* with the natives—from north to south—from east to west; for they are looked on by them with distrust and hatred. Such, then, being the real position of the relative parties, and such the hold which the British have over the natives, it is deeply to be lamented that no general and effectual course has been adopted to bring them within the pale of Christianity and civilization. Perhaps on the whole surface of the earth there is not a wider and more easy field for the operation of the missionaries, or one from which a richer harvest could be reaped. The natives are, *generally*, of a yielding and plastic character; and the principles of their belief, abstractedly from their various superstitions, harmonize in some measure with the elementary truths of the Bible.

Without enumerating the various points in their natural theology, or giving a repetition of the several heads of creed professed by the different tribes, it will be quite enough for my purpose to say, that they believe in the existence of a great superintending Spirit, who created the world and all beings on it, rational and irrational; who still exercises a paternal power and supervision over his creatures—that they believe in the existence of a subordinate spirit, whose motives are evil, and whose dwelling is in fire, and whose whole aim is to neutralize the beneficence of the great Good Spirit towards his earthly creatures, and to tempt these creatures to evil—that they believe in the immortality of the soul, and in a state of future rewards and punishments, commensurate with their earthly merits or demerits—that they believe these merits consist in the faithful discharge of all the domestic and social duties—that they believe it is incumbent on them to offer daily homage to this Good Spirit—that they believe this Spirit sometimes condescends, on great occasions, to hold converse with their great and good men, or communicate his will by nocturnal visions. Some of them go farther, and believe in the fallen state of man; some in a subordinate agent, identified with the Good and Great Spirit, doing his earthly work. Some, again, in their belief approach the historical truths of the Old Testament. They believe that this world was, in its primeval state, a fluid mass, enveloped in darkness, and yielding no living or growing thing—animal or vegetable; but that the Great Spirit descended upon it in the shape of a huge bird, and, by brooding over it, gave it consistency and solidity—created the sun and moon, and all animated things on the earth. (This is the scriptural account: in which the words—"the Spirit of God *moved* on the surface of the waters," strictly means, "the Spirit of God *brooded* (like a bird) on the surface of the waters")—that there soon arose a general corruption among mankind; and then men lived a *long time*;—that there was a general deluge, which swept away almost all men and animals—that some few were saved—that after that men became wicked again; and then our ancestors came from the rising sun, a great distance.

It deserves to be noticed, that, before the conquest of Canada, the Jesuit missionaries propagated, to a vast extent, the principles of the Christian faith among the remotest tribes: and did it successfully. And, had not the conquest taken place, there would have now been diffused, to the most inaccessible heights and deepest dells of the continent, Christianity—perhaps Christianity in a bad form, but yet Christianity in all its elements—better than no Christianity at all. I regret to be obliged to state, that since the conquest, but little, comparatively, has been done for the conversion of the natives in the interior, and west. This is a complaint made by others. It is true, there is a school for missionaries, at Red River settlement; but it is, necessarily, on too limited a scale for general purposes.

I have heard often, from our voyageurs and trappers, that they saw rude crosses painted on lowly and deserted huts, or cut on trees, in the interior of the country, one thousand miles beyond the bounds of civilization. To these emblems there is always a devotional reverence paid, for there is associated with them a traditionary record in the Indian mind, that they were the work of "the good white fathers, who, unlike other white men, never robbed or cheated them."

But, exclusively of the humanity of converting the Indians to Christianity on sober and rational principles, there is a high principle of state policy involved in it. If the natives were converted, through the instrumentality of the Church of England, or even of British dissenters, to Christianity, they would, *en masse*, attach themselves to Great Britain. But as England has not used this powerful lever to move them, and as they are left through this culpable apathy and neglect to the influence of the Papal power, (which has already, within a few months, inducted a bishop to the Oregon district, under the title of "Bishop of Philadelphia, *in partibus infidelium*,") and to the dissenters that swarm into the country from the United States, the British tenure of their affections must soon be enfeebled.

The American missionaries are used by the American government, and fairly represented by the American writers, as political instruments, in exercising their influence with the natives, to attach them to republican institutions, and to make them the passive recipients of all sorts of anti-British antipathies: and thus the Americans hope to recover the position in the country which they lost by their want of integrity, or energy, as traders. This is well worth the consideration of the British government, and the British Missionary Societies. I shall conclude by repeating, that there is not, in the world, a finer or an easier field for the holy work of Christian conversion.

THE END.

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From a Review of the Englishwoman in Egypt, in Blackwood's Magazine.

Part of the work is taken from the MS. notes of Mrs. Poole's brother, E. W. Lane, author of the Modern Egyptians; but the authoress can very well afford to rest her claim to popularity on her own merits; and, we prefer to follow her in her own peculiar sphere, into those mysterious recesses of an oriental establishment, whither no male footstep can ever penetrate. Mrs. Poole is probably the first English lady who has been admitted, not merely as a passing visiter, but as a privileged *friend*, into the hareems of those of the highest rank in the Egyptian capital. We find her threading the narrow and crowded thoroughfares of Cairo, borne aloft on the "high ass," (the usual mode of conveyance for morning calls,) and are introduced to the wives and daughters of the viceroy, and even, (in the hareem of Habeeb Effendi,) to ladies of the imperial house of Othman, in the ease and *disinvoltura* of their domestic circles, amid that atmosphere of *dolce far niente* and graceful etiquette, in which the hours of an oriental princess appear to be habitually passed.

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